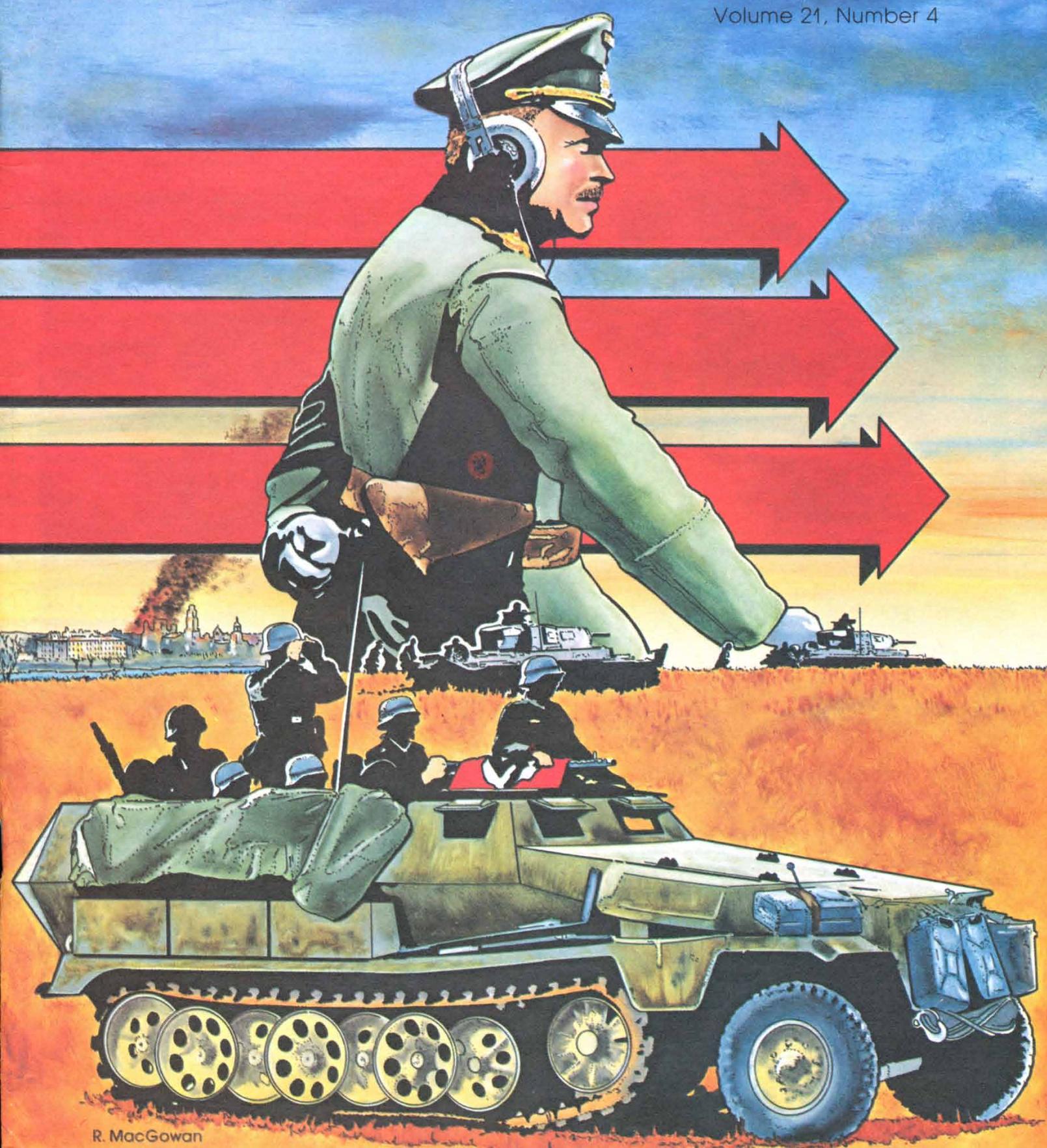


# GENERAL

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AVALON HILL

Volume 21, Number 4



# The AVALON HILL GENERAL

The Game Players Magazine

The Avalon Hill Game Company's *GENERAL* is dedicated to the presentation of authoritative articles on the strategy, tactics, and variation of our games of strategy. Historical articles are included only inasmuch as they provide useful background information on current AH titles. The *GENERAL* is published by The Avalon Hill Game Company solely for the cultural edification of the serious game aficionado, in the hopes of improving the game owner's proficiency of play and providing services not otherwise available to the game buff. The Avalon Hill Game Company is a division of Monarch Avalon Industries, Inc. The shares of Monarch Avalon, Inc. are publicly traded on the NASDAQ System under the symbol MAHI. For information about the company write to Martha Burman at the executive offices at the company, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214.

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**COVER ART:** Rodger MacGowan

**MASTHEAD DESIGN:** Stephanie Czech

**AREA Technician:** Brenda Parrish

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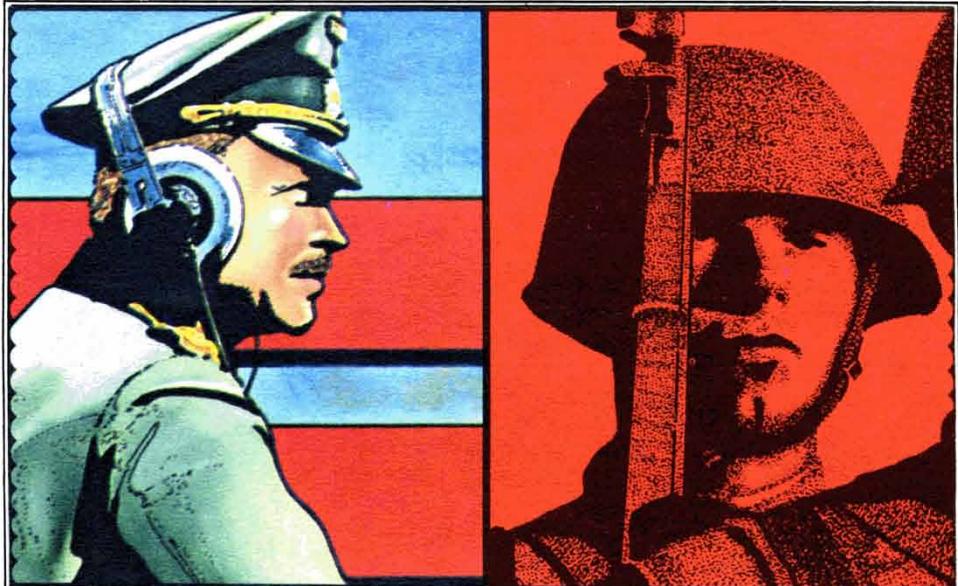
## AH Philosophy Part 106

Inside Vol. 20, No. 6 of The *GENERAL* was an unheralded surprise pleasant we trust—for the readership. It was, of course, the first issue of the *Victory Insider*, printed and mailed as an insert. Since that auspicious appearance it has become a regular feature, one we hope is looked forward to by many. Now for the revelations concerning that genesis.

With the creation of Victory Games and their great success in designing and marketing wargames for the "hard-core", pressure began to mount from various quarters to provide supportive coverage in these pages. Foreseeing a plethora of difficulties, some serious and some trivial but annoying, I objected—not to the concept, but to the execution.

First and foremost in my mind was that any such inclusion of VG articles would necessarily decrease the space devoted to our own extensive line. Trying to provide equitable coverage of the adventure and historical boardgames of The Avalon Hill Game Company's growing line is task enough without the adding of dozens more to demand premium space. Perforce, such attention placed on VG games would affect many of the regular features of The *GENERAL* as well—the Letters column, "The Question Box", the RBG charts, advertisements, and so forth. This would mean a dilution of our concentration, I felt, submerging the fascinating and distinctive approaches of the separate design staffs. Both have

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# LORDS OF CREATION

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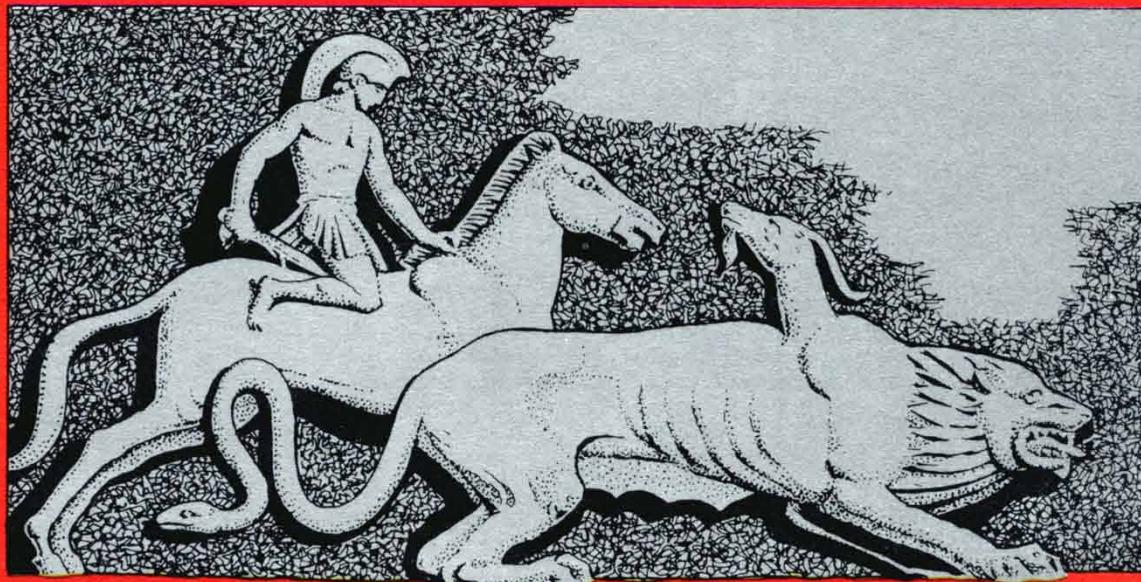
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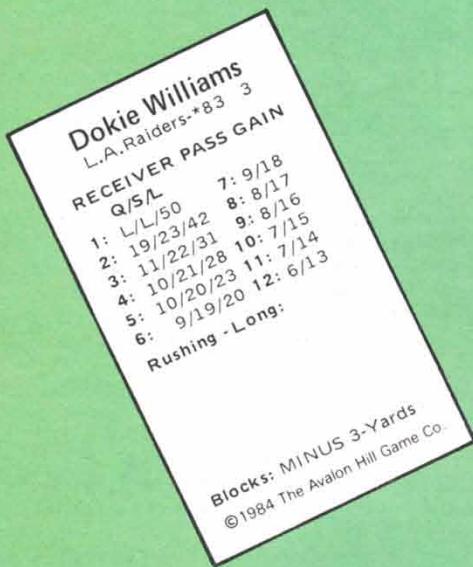
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**LORDS OF CREATION** is now available for \$12.00 from The Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214. **The Horn of Roland**, **The Yeti Sanction** and **Omegakron** are available for \$8.00 each. Please add 10% for shipping and handling (20% for Canadian orders; 30% for overseas orders). Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.



# SPORTS

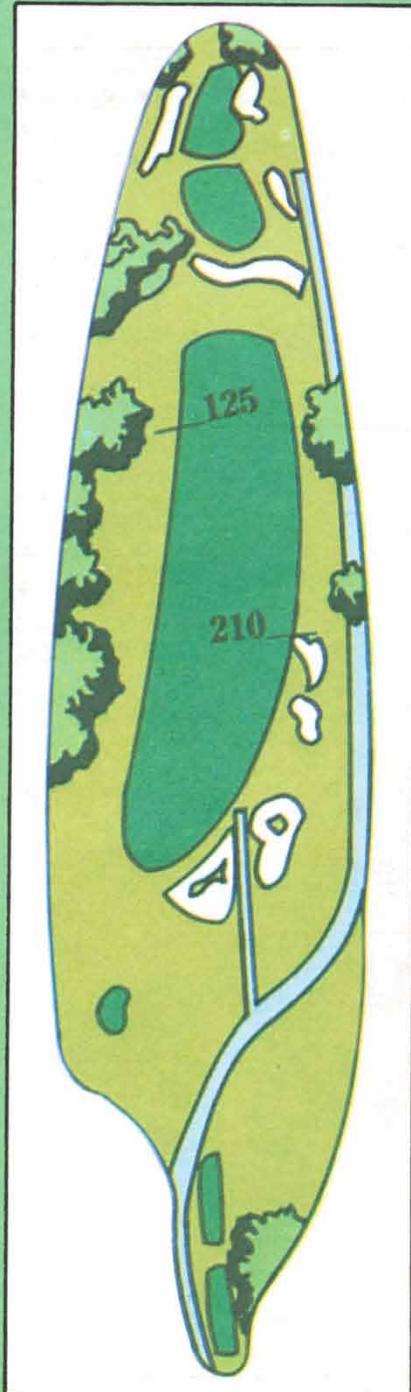


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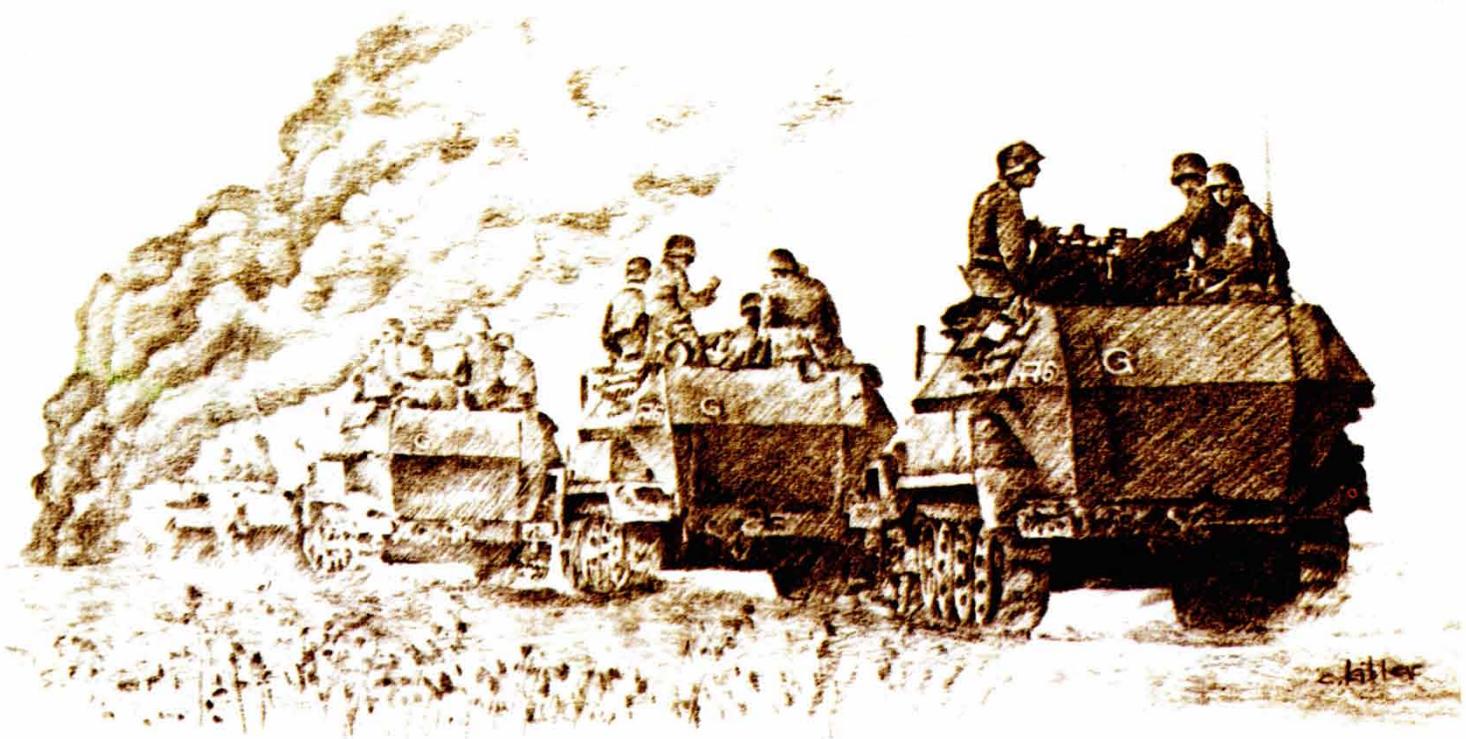


abilities in each of the following categories: free-throw shooting, field goal shooting, rebounding, fouls, foul drawing, blocking shots, stealing the ball, assists, defense and stamina. You pick the starting line-ups, send in substitutes, and call the fast break or slow down.

Or maybe, the gentle greens are for you. The latest in course booklets for the innovative **PRO GOLF** is ready featuring Pebble Beach, site of two U.S. Opens, the PGA and the annual Bing Crosby Pro-Am. Pebble Beach is considered among the finest in the world, and here it is in perfect scale—woods, rocks, sandtraps and all. It is the rare golfer who can win at Pebble Beach under par; in one case Nicklaus wound up two over par and still won by three strokes! Perhaps you can do better?

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# IS SMOLENSK BURNING?

## PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN Re-visited

By Henry C. Robinette

Why do some games become "classics" that are played time and time again? Many games go stale after a few playings because, like puzzles, they can be solved. After players determine the optimal opening moves and tactics, play is all too predictable and about as exciting as watching cars rust on a rainy afternoon. Eventually stale games collect dust on closet shelves. *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* plays as fresh today as it did seven years ago when it burst upon the wargaming scene with a number of innovative concepts.

*PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*, for those who've not yet played this classic, is a regimental/divisional wargame of the German drive to cross the Dneiper River in the summer of 1941 and seize Smolensk—Moscow's first line of defense. Each game turn represents two days (twelve turns cover the action) and each hex equals ten kilometers. It is simple to learn, and playable in an evening.

### The Game System

Understanding the game system is basic to understanding the strategies and tactics necessary for winning any game. The one concept that established *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* as a game apart from all others was the use of untried units. All Soviet units are inverted, selected at random, and not disclosed to either player until the instant of combat. This neatly simulates the "fog of war" and adds a dimension of uncertainty to every combat. Also, it eliminates "factor fidget", the shuffling of units to get that exact number of combat factors needed for predetermined precise odds. Because of the untried units, no two games of *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* can ever be exactly alike.

Another concept—overrun attacks—was not unique to *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*, but the

manner in which it was handled certainly was. Other games had allowed for automatic victory against weak units, but usually only at high odds with the attacking units unable to move or attack again during the turn of the automatic victory. *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* integrated overrun attacks with movement. As long as they suffer no adverse effects, overrunning units can make as many overruns as their movement allowance permits. Defending units can suffer as many overruns in a turn as the attacker cares to make. Successful overruns disrupt the defending unit, making it lose its zone of control and its movement allowance for a turn.

Divisional integrity also first appeared in *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*. Panzer and mechanized infantry regiments double their combat strength when all the regiments of a division stack together. This rule gave the gamer an incentive to employ his units by division—efficiently and effectively.

In discussing *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*, the significance of the unique combat results table and the application of combat results are often slighted. Except for Attacker and Defender Eliminated results, players have the option to retreat or take step losses to remain in place. Thus a defender can hold key terrain as long as he is willing and able to lose steps from his involved units. Combat resolution is, to a great deal, in the hands of the player. For the first time, a player may institute a true "stand fast" order and engage in *battles* of attrition in a strategic game. If the defender retreats, the attacker may follow along the path of retreat. Since the opposing player always dictates the retreat path, the advance after combat may isolate other units that have yet to be attacked. Optional retreat and the possibility of the defender advancing after an Attacker Retreat add flexibility to the game.

But even with all this, the supply rule is the heart of the game. Supply for the German army is simple: be 20 hexes from a road leading uninterrupted by enemy units, enemy zones of control, or the Soviet interdiction marker to the western map edge, or be within 20 *movement points* of the western map edge. As there is only one road exiting the western map edge, the Germans are somewhat road-bound for supply purposes. Supply for the Soviet army is dependent on headquarters. Each Soviet army headquarters in the game, named for its commanding general, has a *command radius* that also serves as its combat strength. The command radius varies from two to five hexes according to the headquarters used for tracing supply. The headquarters must then trace a line of hexes of any length free of enemy units and their zones of control to the eastern edge of the map. Soviet units cannot attack unless they are within the command radius of the headquarters. A headquarters may add its strength in the attack to the units in its stack, but it does not add its strength on the defense (although it may be lost to satisfy a step loss combat result). When a unit is unsupplied, it loses half its movement allowance and has its combat strength halved, losing any fractions.

Strategy and tactics in *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* succeed or fail based on how well they relate to the supply rule. German strategy should aim to open the Minsk-Moscow road to ensure maximum mobility and combat strength. German tactics should strive to kill or isolate Soviet headquarters so as to paralyze and weaken the Soviet Army. The Soviet strategy is to deny the Germans the use of the road as long as possible so as to take away the Germans' mobility. To win more than a marginal victory, the German must penetrate to the eastern map edge by the end of the twelfth turn. Soviet tactics should protect the headquarters as

**Figure 1** Defending the Orsha Landbridge, the first turn deployment according to Lippert and Mumma assuming that the 19th Army does not move. If the 19th does move, one infantry division should deploy to the woods in hexes 1014, 0816, 0817, 0917. Koniev should go to hex 1216. The 16th Army is assumed not to move. The "X" in hex 1016 marks the furthest 24th Army units could move unimpeded by interdiction; if interdicted, it can just reach Smolensk.

much as possible (the quickest way to collapse a position is to put it out of supply).

Victory in *PANZERGRUPPE GUDELIAN* is determined on the basis of victory points. The German player receives victory points for capturing and holding cities and further key victory point objective hexes on the map. The Soviet player receives victory points for *recapturing* cities and for each entire German division (other than the cavalry division) that is eliminated. Soviet victory points are subtracted from the German total and compared to the victory point schedule to determine the level of victory. From 50 to 79 victory points is a German marginal victory. Vitebsk, Orsha, and Mogilev—all within five hexes of the western map edge—are virtual gifts worth twenty victory points. The German player need only capture Smolensk and either Roslavl or Yel'nya without losing any divisions to assure a marginal victory. If he can't do that in twelve turns, he should seriously consider watching television instead of playing wargames. My suggestion: 50 to 79 victory points should be considered a draw.

## The Terrain

How well the Soviet player fares in *PANZERGRUPPE GUDELIAN* depends on how well he is able to use the terrain to his best advantage for defense. The key feature is the Minsk-Moscow highway running from hex 0120 to 5907. It branches in hex 2115 near Smolensk and runs through the city to Roslavl and from there to hex 5915. Several forest hexes along this road can be put to good use as can the two river lines, the Vop and the Dnepr, that intersect it. To the south the terrain around Roslavl offers excellent defensive positions. Since all victory point objective hexes except Rzhev are within seven hexes of these roads, their importance should be obvious. The rail net, so important to the Soviet player for shuffling his reinforcements and headquarters around, dictates the location where he can best make a stand. The rivers hinder north-to-south movement and are useful for securing blocking positions on the flanks. The forest hexes north and west of Smolensk, southwest and west of Vyzhma, along the Vop River, and around Roslavl are the key defensive positions.

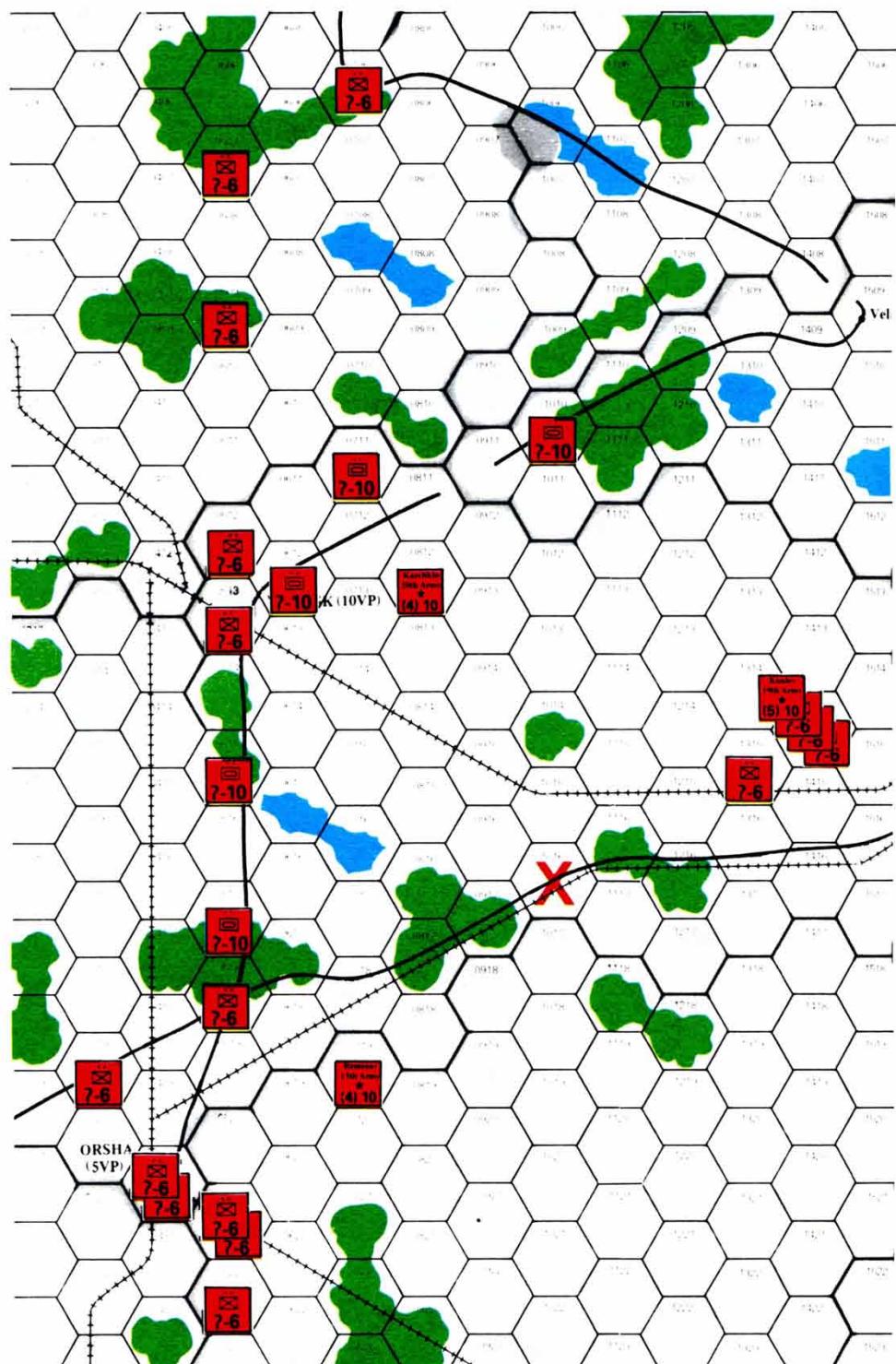
Three of the cities—Smolensk, Vyzhma, and Roslavl—should be heavily defended. Roslavl, especially, should be held since it blocks the southern road. The Vop River line must be manned by the time Smolensk falls. The "Land Bridge" is the area between the Western Dvina and Kasplya Rivers and the Dnepr River. Although it offers good initial delaying positions, it is too far forward for the Soviet to attempt to hold in force. Note how the rivers and forests tend to channelize the German advance through this land bridge.

## The Units

Of the two armies in *PANZERGRUPPE GUDELIAN*, the German is the better by far. Its four-step infantry divisions and its many powerful, mobile mechanized formations can strike fast and hit hard. So, what are the strengths and weaknesses of these units?

### The Panzer Divisions:

The panzers are easily the most powerful units on the board so long as they remain stacked together for divisional integrity. They can overrun any single enemy unit. They are most effective when concen-



trated against key positions or when used for deep penetrations. With their six steps, they can take a lot of punishment before being completely destroyed. But, whenever the component regiments are not stacked together, the panzer divisions become vulnerable. Retreat after adverse combat results leaves the regiments scattered and unable to overrun in the next Movement Phase. And they cost victory points if totally destroyed.

### The Motorized Divisions:

The advantages to these are similar to the panzer divisions. The motorized divisions are very useful for flanking maneuvers and securing the flanks. However, motorized divisions cannot overrun supplied and doubled units without unacceptable risk. With only four steps, they are fragile on defense even with divisional integrity. The component regiments when unstacked are vulnerable, but not as

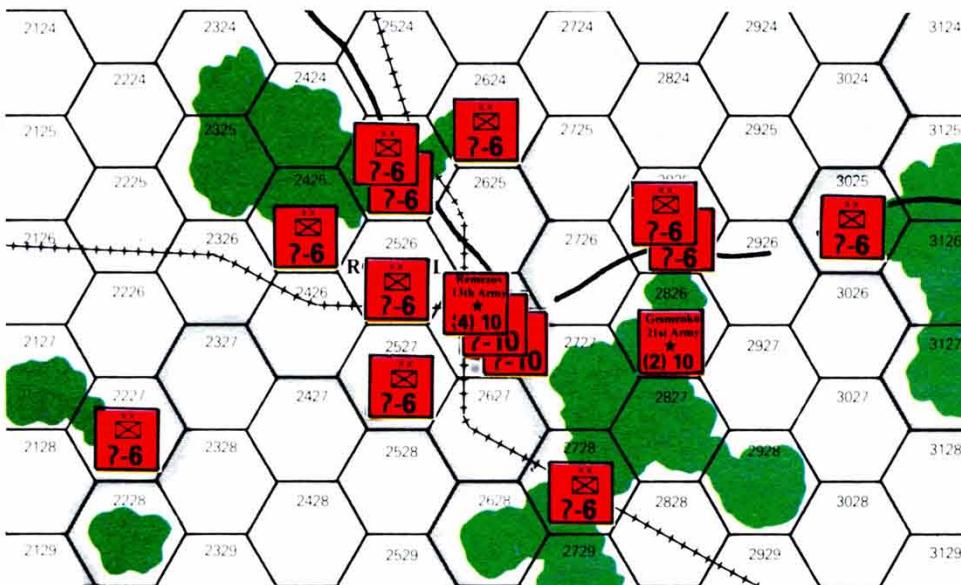
much as those of the panzer division. They too cost victory points if totally destroyed.

### The Infantry Divisions:

Fortunately (or unfortunately depending on the role taken) in this game, the German infantry is faster than most Russian units. They are sturdy on both the offense and the defense. They are quite good for reducing bypassed Soviet units and maintaining rear area security. But, the infantry is slow compared to the armored divisions and rarely arrives in time to contribute to the main attacks along the front lines. They lack divisional integrity. Victory points are lost if they are totally destroyed.

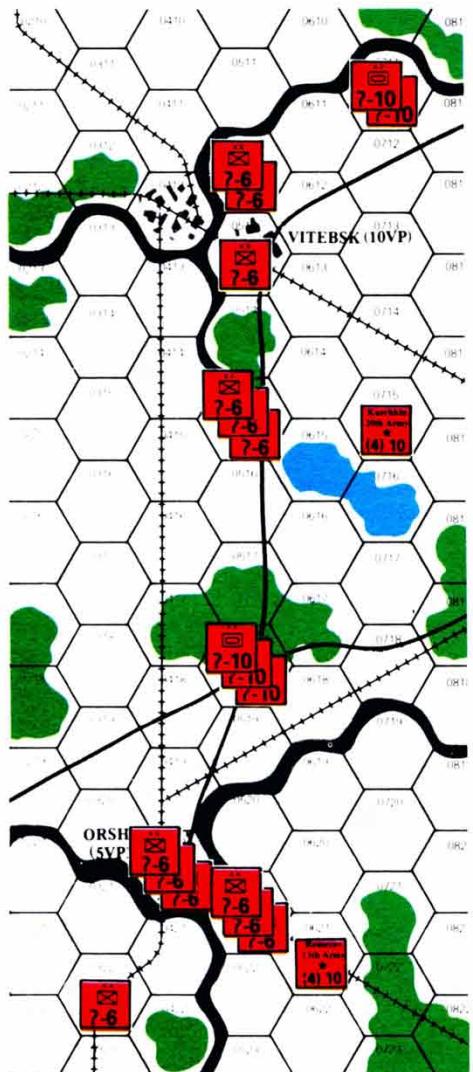
### The Independent Mechanized Regiments:

The independent mechanized regiments have good mobility and are useful for wide flanking maneuvers and security. But they have weak combat strengths and cannot attack alone without unaccept-



**Figure 2** The Roslavl Hedgehog on Soviet Turn 4. This set-up includes the entire 21st Army, four Southwestern Front reinforcements, and two provisional reinforcements. Note how the "Egg" defense allows the 13th Army headquarters to move to Roslavl.

**Figure 3** The Egg, first turn deployment by Dunne, Gunson and Parish. If the 19th Army could move, it sends two infantry divisions to hex 0912, two more infantry divisions to hex 1014 and Koniev to Smolensk. If the 16th Army can move, two of its infantry divisions go to hex 0513. The 20th Army infantry division at hex 0513 would then be placed in hex 0518 where it would free an armored division that proceeds to hex 0711.



able risk. Since they have only two steps, they are very vulnerable. Luckily, no victory points are lost if they are destroyed.

#### The Cavalry Division:

The Cavalry Division moves in both movement phases and is very important for securing the rear area rail net. Yet, with only two steps the Cavalry Division cannot take much punishment. It is too weak to attack alone and should never be exposed to a possible counterattack. If lost, no victory points are lost.

#### The Air Interdiction Units:

Air interdiction units are perfect for slowing Soviet reinforcements. They are doubly effective when placed in hexes that contain both a railroad and a road. But, air interdiction range is limited before Smolensk is captured. They are not very effective when used for any role other than rail interdiction or when used singly instead of together on adjacent hexes.

The Soviet army is a motley hodgepodge of units of very uneven quality. The individual Soviet division must retreat or die since it has only one step. The Soviet army is a radically different force than the German army:

#### The Tank Divisions:

Good movement rates enable Soviet armored divisions to cover a wide area when used as a reserve. They can also threaten a broad region when used on raids late in the game. As with all Soviet units, armored divisions are of unknown strength with three phantoms of zero strength. The average armored division is a three. With only one step they can be easily destroyed if there is no room for retreat.

#### The Mechanized Divisions:

Strengths are the same as those of armored divisions except there are no phantom units. They are good for counterattacking when stacked. But, fifty percent of the mechanized divisions have a strength of four or less. Brittle and weak.

#### The Infantry Divisions:

Since there are so many Soviet infantry divisions, they are expendable. They move well enough through woods and by rail. The percentage of attack strengths five through nine for Soviet infantry is 20.5%. The percentage of defense strength three through five is 56.4% and six through eight is 20.5%. However, Soviet infantry is notoriously unreliable when attacking, with fully 25.6% having a strength of zero or one. The defensive capabilities are also inconsistent with 10.3% zero-valued units and 7.8% of one or two defensive strength

points. Soviet infantry is especially impotent without supply and command control from headquarters units.

#### The Headquarters Units:

Headquarters are a known quantity and can augment the attack capability of units stacked with them while providing supply and command control radius. They move by rail without counting against the rail capacity. They have a limited evacuation capability. However, they too have liabilities. Headquarters units do not augment *defense* strengths of units stacked with them. They are exceptionally vulnerable when alone or when stacked with one other unit. Nor can they enter an enemy zone of control by themselves.

#### The Air Interdiction Marker:

When placed on hex 0120 the air interdiction marker can cut off supply for most of the German Army. However, the air interdiction marker interrupts German supply only during the German player turn and can be used but *three* times during the game. It cannot be located in a hex occupied by a German unit. Its time and point of placement is a critical decision for the Russian player, one which entire articles could cover sufficiently.

In sum, the nine panzer divisions and six motorized divisions constitute a formidable juggernaut of 22 combat strength points with full divisional integrity. This alone is a whopping 72% of the complete German counter mix defense strengths. The eighteen German infantry divisions add a further 162 combat strength points, but because these enter play in small groups over a period of time and thus seldom arrive at the decisive points of battle, they are less effective than the mechanized divisions and are for the most part superfluous. Against this mighty combat machine the Soviet Army can muster eleven armored or mechanized divisions, twelve infantry divisions of provisional reinforcements, 92 infantry divisions and an additional ten infantry divisions of optional reinforcements from the Southwestern Front. Although these are all untried units of varying strength, the Soviet player can usually hold any position on the map providing that it is doubling or tripling terrain defended by at least three supplied units and that reserves are available to replace losses. Only by the efficient use of defensible terrain and reserves can the Soviet Army delay and perhaps stop the German advance.

#### Tactics

An overview of the two basic tactics, the "Pin" and the "Overrun", used in *PANZERGRUPPE GUDELIAN* is essential for a full understanding of the strategies of the game. Let us briefly explore each in turn.

The Pin tactic arises from the sticky zone-of-control rule found in this game. Whenever a unit is in an enemy zone of control, it is stuck in place and will remain stuck there until either the enemy unit exerting the zone-of-control or the friendly unit is removed by combat or overrun. The Pin is a useful delaying tactic for the defender. By pinning panzer divisions with even single units, the Soviet player forces the German to either overrun or attack the pinning units, thus delaying the Germans and buying time for the main line of resistance. The Pin can also be a useful tactic for the attacker. After a breakthrough has been made, the German player can pin nearby units to keep them from reacting. Soviet headquarters can be pinned so that they can be killed in subsequent turns. He can even pin Soviet units in clear terrain so they will be easier to kill. The Pin works best for holding enemy units out of position so that they cannot be available where needed in the following turn and for disrupting the best laid plans of the enemy.

The Overrun is the one tactic that can make or break the German offensive. The Overrun is most

**Figure 4** A Red Carpet Defense on the third Soviet turn. Only one possibility in this flexible defense.

effective against single units in clear terrain. Against two units in supply on clear terrain it becomes risky, and against doubled or tripled units in supply it is positively foolhardy. The advantage of the Overrun is that it enables a unit to attack more than once in a player turn. By overrunning, it is possible to punch a hole in the defender's line, move through it, and surround other enemy units before combat. The number of overruns the German should make each movement phase is a subjective decision. Because of the fact that Soviet defensive strengths are unknown, the matter must be carefully weighed—both the best and worst possible odds and results taken into account. Master players of this game, Larry Lippert and Gregory Mumm, urge moderation in using overruns even though a full-strength panzer division overrunning a single Soviet unit on clear terrain has a 23% chance of 4-1 or better odds, 35.9% of 2-1, and 41.03% of 1-1. With an unreduced motorized division, they show a 23.8% chance for 3-1 or better odds, 16.67% for 2-1 odds, 44.87% for 1-1 odds, and 15.39 percent for 1-2 odds. Charles Starks, however, believes differently: "As long as there is space to retreat to, I feel most overruns against one or two unit stacks, even in doubled positions, but not tripled, are potentially useful enough to outweigh the dangers involved."

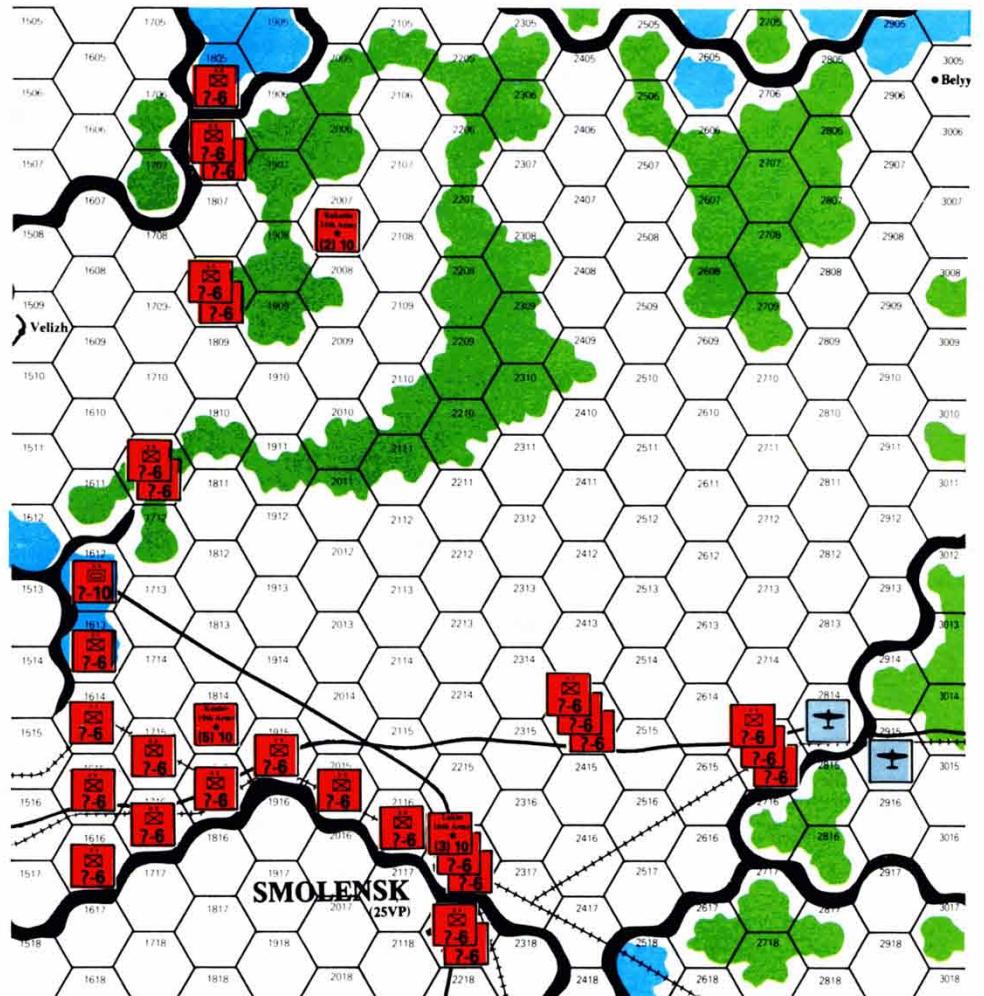
The dangers involved with the Overrun are not insignificant even at high odds. Since a split result, wherein both the attacker and defender must retreat or lose a step, stops movement, too many overruns can immobilize the offensive for a turn. At 8-1 and 9-1 odds there is a 16% chance for an adverse result. At 6-1 and 7-1 this becomes a 33.3% chance. At 3-1 and 4-1 this becomes a 50% chance (of which there is a 16% chance of "Engaged", and a mandatory step loss). At 2-1 there is a 66.6% chance for an adverse result and at 1-1 this is a 83% risk. A 1-2 overrun is 100 percent adverse with a 16% chance for an outright "Attacker Elimination". Since, as shown above, many of the Overruns are made at relatively low odds, the problems facing the attacker are not inconsiderable.

During the first movement phase, the German can retreat on adverse results. But retreating will usually unstack his division, leaving it unable to overrun in the mechanized movement phase and it will prevent the division from attacking in the Combat Phase. Similarly, in the Mechanized Movement Phase, a retreat will deprive the division of overrun capability in the next turn's movement phase while possibly exposing it to a devastating counter-attack. So, many times the German must choose to lose a step in order to maintain divisional integrity or to keep the overrunning unit adjacent to Soviet units so that it can attack again. But taking step losses on overruns (and combat as well) leads to the gradual attrition of the German's mechanized units and the blunting of his spearhead. Using the front of flank overrun wherein one unit gets behind the target unit so that the overrunning unit from the front will cut off supply at the instant of overrun can minimize the risk of low odds overrun to some extent.

## Soviet Strategies

There are three basic strategies for the Soviet player. These have been labeled by other authors "The Orsha Landbridge", "The Main Line of Resistance", and "The Egg".

Larry Lippert and Gregory Mumm espoused the Orsha Landbridge strategy (see Figure 1), which aims to deny the Germans as much of the 0120 to Smolensk road as possible for as many turns as possible. Most Russian reinforcements are thrown into the area north of the Dnepr River and south of the West Dvina or Kasplya rivers. Only the third turn reinforcements with four of the optional South-



western Front units and a (5)-10 headquarters are deployed around Roslavl. The idea is to defend in depth within a narrow salient.

Charles Starks and Redmond A. Simonsen, however, advocated a rapid withdrawal to the vicinity west of Smolensk leaving only a token rear-guard force in the forest hexes along the road to delay the Germans. They set up a main line of resistance a few hexes west of Smolensk and extended it in a straight line north to the West Dvina River and south to Roslavl. Around Smolensk this main line of resistance would consist of stacks of two and three units on adjacent hexes. To the north and south of the central position the stacks are spaced out; but instead of every other hex, they are set up two stacks adjacent and skip a hex between the next two stacks. Units on every other hex weaken the defense since should a stack be eliminated or overrun it creates a hole in the line, whereas if another stack was adjacent to it there would still be a zone-of-control to stop movement.

Mr. Simonsen went a step further to explain the defense to use after the main line of resistance is eventually smashed. He recommends creating defensive enclaves (hedgehogs) centered around the victory objective hexes. The objective hex itself should have at least two strong "tried" units if possible and a headquarters. Deployed around this hex in a circle two or three hexes out will be stacks of two or three untried units on adjacent hexes. Roslavl (see Figure 2) and Vyazma, at the very least, should be turned into hedgehogs.

Bill Dunne, Mike Gunson, and David Parish advocated a synthesis of the two aforementioned strategies. They observe, quite correctly, that the rapid fall back of the main line of resistance strategy will not delay the Germans enough. In fact, the Germans would be on top of the main line of resistance before it could be set up. They deploy the 20th and

13th Armies (Figure 3) to form a hedgehog that they call "The Egg". These two armies and the 19th Army cling to the forests along the road and should delay the Germans for three or four critical turns while the reinforcements form strong hedgehogs around Smolensk and Roslavl. The gap between Smolensk and Roslavl is not defended since there is no defensible terrain and it would take too many units to try to hold it. As long as either hedgehog remains in Soviet hands, any German advance through the gap will be unsupplied, especially when the interdiction marker is used.

As a variant of the main line of resistance, the Soviet player may disperse his units one to a hex in a band three or four hexes wide instead of stacking them three to a hex. These "wall-to-wall" units laid down in a red carpet (Figure 4) form a real defense in depth. Obviously, there will not be enough units to carpet a wide front, but the gap between the Kasplya and the Dnepr Rivers is ideal. The flanks are secured by doubled positions difficult to clear and the carpet with its single units, in contrast, looks easy to penetrate. With average luck on the selection of untried units, German overruns against the carpet's edge should seldom be at odds higher than 4-1. Thus there is little likelihood of an outright elimination and such losses as result from the initial overruns should be from engaged or D1 results wherein the overrun unit was retreated onto a hex that is then itself overrun. A D2 result should thicken the carpet as the retreat is made to the rear. If a German division attempts to overrun a second unit it may be unable to retreat on adverse results and will suffer a step loss. Advance after combat will be limited to exactly one hex. It is difficult to isolate units in the carpet from supply and retreat; units retreating after combat are merely reinforcing the next line of hexes making them harder to overrun in the Mechanized Movement Phase. Sure

the German can eventually bludgeon his way through the carpet as he can eventually burst through any line the Soviets erect, but when he does he will not be able to pin all the defenders as he could against the conventional stacked line. The real beauty of this red carpet defense is it takes the German's main strength—his ability to overrun—and turns it against him. The more overruns the German makes, the more times he rolls the die and the more opportunities he has to take step losses on adverse results.

The conventional consensus of opinion is that the Soviet player should never attack unless he can pick off a component regiment that has become separated from the rest of its division—and only then after much trepidation and soul searching. Nonsense! The Soviet player should not eschew the offensive. Whenever the Soviet player can surround a motorized or panzer division on clear terrain, he should consider attacking it. If it is isolated or other nearby German divisions are pinned, it should be attacked if the Soviet player can spare five or six units for a possible 1-1 attack. A 1-1 attack has a 66% chance of inflicting a step loss on the defender and the Soviet player can usually lose one or two units to avoid a retreat. When attacking, the unit blocking the defender's supply should not be used, for if it should be a zero strength phantom unit, the defender would then be supplied. A counterattack on an isolated division, preferably a motorized one, will sometimes divert German strength from more critical segments of the front. Generally, counterattacks should be reserved for the middle and end game turns before using the interdiction marker so that the German reaction will be enfeebled.

The interdiction marker should not be used until after Smolensk itself has fallen as it will not be able to unsupply the German mechanized divisions attacking Smolensk. Smolensk should hold out until turn seven or eight at the latest. (If it falls earlier, the Soviet player is in deep trouble.) So the interdiction should be made on turns nine, ten, and eleven.

The Soviet player should keep his mechanized and armored units in reserve if at all possible. These units must be available to pin or counterattack German units that have penetrated the main line of resistance. Late in the game they can raid the German rear to recapture victory point cities or threaten the German supply lines. There should be a garrison in every victory point hex south and west of Vyazma inclusive. The strength of these garrisons should correspond to the proximity of German units. There is nothing worse than watching the panzers roll unopposed into a vacant objective hex in the Mechanized Movement Phase. Make the German fight for everything he gets.

## German Strategies

German strategy, especially in the first three turns, is usually a reaction to the Soviet's deployment. The first decision the German player faces is whether to attempt to penetrate the front or to swing around it to the north for an envelopment. If the choice is envelopment, the German player must choose between a shallow or a deep envelopment into the woods north of Smolensk. The shallow envelopment will seal the doom of 20th Army possibly as early as the second turn, but it will allow the Soviet player to establish his main line of resistance near Smolensk without any real interference. The deep envelopment will seize good defensive terrain thereby preventing the Soviets from occupying it. However, there are not enough German units on the first and second turns to secure the flanks and the deep enveloping force could be pinned down and cut off from supply. If the Soviet player is aggressive and counterattacks, some of the German divisions could be endangered as with the 20th Army still intact it could be as late as turn four before help could arrive.

If Soviet 19th Army has not moved and the forests along the road are not occupied by enemy troops, then the choice may be penetration. A penetration attack to seize the blocking terrain along the road affords an excellent springboard for the third turn German reinforcements. The "Egg" defense is much too hard to crack with the 39th Panzer Corps alone and should be flanked to the north.

By the third turn the German player should be clearing the road with some of his surplus armored units and infantry while the rest of his mechanized force races around the flanks to surround Smolensk. At this stage of the game killing every Soviet unit is not necessary. The German panzers should concentrate on crucial positions where a successful attack will open a hole in the line so that they can break through to exploit during the Mechanized Movement Phase. Infantry should pin as many Soviet units as possible so that they can be mopped up later when the rest arrives. Some mechanized units may have to be detailed for flank security to keep the road open until these pockets are reduced.

Smolensk should be surrounded before attacking it. The German player should always strive to put any heavily defended position out of supply before attacking. Once Smolensk is isolated, the Soviet player will not be able to replace his losses in a protracted battle. Smolensk should be captured no later than turn eight, but every effort must be made to take it before then. The longer you delay, the greater the danger grows.

After the fall of Smolensk, the German player must choose between the northern advance through Vyazma or the southern route through Roslavl. While the road to Vyazma is certainly the most direct route to the eastern edge, it is likely to be the most heavily defended. The terrain channelizes the approach to Vyazma along the narrow front and the railroad enables rapid reinforcement in this sector. The southern route offers a lightly defended road to the eastern edge and has the added advantage that Soviet reinforcements take a long time to reach the front. The German should concentrate on one or the other routes and should not try to secure both at the same time, although he will do best if he threatens to open both. I like to take Roslavl and Yel'nya before Vyazma so that the strong positions on the Vop and Dnepr Rivers can be flanked.

If the German player finds all his mechanized units pinned by strong stacks of Soviet units at the beginning of a turn, he has done something wrong. He must preserve his mobility in order to win. He should have a few units free to exploit any breakthroughs that occur on every turn. Similarly, overruns should be executed first so that units will be available to pour through the holes. The German should make deep penetrations whenever possible. Some mechanized units should be screened so that they cannot be pinned and will therefore be able to move. The German player should position his units so they cannot be pinned from hexes with favorable defensive terrain; make the Soviet player pin from clear hexes where he is vulnerable. Although the Germans have enough power to smash any Soviet position, the German player must not let the game become a static slugfest. He must keep the panzers moving.

## Conclusion

*PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* is a challenging game for both players. This article has been slanted toward the Soviet side because defense in any game is always the more difficult to play, the advantages more subtle. The Soviet player will usually be hard pressed to hold the German to a marginal victory. But competent defensive play can usually preclude anything other than a marginal victory for the Germans. The challenge, then is to do better than a German marginal victory. Many a game has ended with the German player only one turn away from a decisive victory.

Unfortunately, this perceived bias in the victory conditions has kept *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* off the tournament schedule at many wargame conventions. In the typical competition the players are paired off in the first round and the winner of each game advances into the second round. If this procedure were followed in a *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* tournament, the second round would be made up almost entirely of gamers who had played the German side in the first round; somebody who had won a decisive victory as the German could be paired with somebody who had barely eked out a marginal victory. (In a tournament with limited time for play there can be no draws.) If this were the case, then the players could just roll the die to see who would be the German player and not bother to play the game. It would certainly save time. Clearly, this approach will not do.

The solution is simple. In a given round, the German player is not playing against the Soviet player for the right to advance into the next round. Instead, he is playing against the other German players as well as against his opponent. The players (whatever number the tournament director feels comfortable with)—German and Russian—with the most points advance into the next round. Next, the players switch sides so that the Soviet player(s) of the previous round would then be the German player(s) of the current round. Simply repeat the procedure until only two remain. Doing this will ensure that only the best all-around players will make it into the final round.

At the *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* tournament of ORIGINS '82, the Soviet player received victory points for territorial objectives the same as the German player; other than this, victory points were awarded in the usual fashion according to the rules. To discourage the Soviet player from stalling in order to keep their victory points high, there was a ten-point penalty for each turn that was not completed. Similarly for the German player there was a five-point penalty for each unfinished turn. Too, everybody had the same die rolls for the 16th and 19th armies (announced by the tournament director and varied for each round). This approach worked very well and I recommend that it be used in future tournaments.

Finally, if you hanker for the classic game—one given to quick and challenging play, and capable of analysis and debate on perfect plans (something seemingly in disrepute these days for some strange reason)—try this fine re-issue of *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN*. It is worth more than passing interest in your over-populated game library.



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# SERIES REPLAY

## PANZERGRUPPE GUDELIAN

Russian Player—Stance Nixon

German Player—Jody Clukey II

Neutral Commentator—Andrew Lockton



*This Series Replay is brought forward by three superlative competitors from the West Coast—auguring a fierce game. The German player, Jody Clukey, placed second and third in the last two PGG tournaments. Stance Nixon has twice placed third in the tournament while the Neutral Commentator, as befitting his position, has placed first and second in the past two PGG tournaments.*

### Pre-Game

**Russian:** We started off by bidding for which side we wish to play; knowing my opponent likes to play the Germans, I started in the 60's in order to make him give me several SouthWestern reinforcements. With the bid being 68, he must capture several of the Victory Point hexes beyond Roslavl. This is where I hope to stop him by blocking his line of supply, pinning as many units as possible, and heavily defending his target hexes.

I will set up a defense that lets me delay the German as well as fall back and use the remainder of the rearguard units. The front line units will be pinned which will let me move the reserve units, the leaders and armor, to the next defensive line. The first defensive line is anchored on the forest-road hexes of 0518 and 0617, and looks like a reversed question mark. The next part of the defense stretches down the road to deny its use to the Germans for movement in the early turns. The final part heads south along the Dnepr River line. This section is designed to make it hard for the German to get into the open areas of the board, at least for the first two turns. This defense gives him the city of Vitebsk but makes him fight for Orsha and Mogilev. The last thing to remember about my defense is that it is supposed to stay as mobile as possible to allow the formation of other lines, filling of holes and, if the German is not careful, the recapture of Russian cities.

The last two lines are not as complex in their execution as in their theory because I will have few mobile units left. Line two forms around Smolensk and stretches from the north edge of the board to the south edge around Roslavl. The third defensive line is on the Vop and Dnepr River line east of Smolensk with pockets around Roslavl, Vyazma and the central forest area. At this time in the game, Turn 7 or 8, the German player should have many of his units pinned and be able to attack with a few mobile armor and mechanized units. His infantry will be used to clean up the pockets I have left behind.

**German:** I bid 68 points simply because my opponent bid 67 and I wanted to be the German (I am a better offensive player than defensive player). This will necessitate my taking Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev, Smolensk, Yel'nya, Roslavl and something past Yel'nya, assuming that he takes no SouthWest Reinforcements and I lose no divisions that count for victory point purposes. I would have preferred a bid of 65 so that I would not have to take anything past Yel'nya, thereby simplifying my problems. But Stance knows me too well to make this easy and so sent the bid up.

The strength of the German army is their panzer and motorized divisions. Their movement allowance of 20 points per game turn, when in supply, makes them awesome. They can punch holes in the Russian line and make deep penetration raids to grab cities, cut rail lines, and overrun solitary leaders, thereby disrupting the Russian defensive plans and the Russian supply lines. It pays to leave some mechanized (panzer and/or motorized) divisions free and unpinned to exploit weaknesses and mistakes, and try to force the Russian player to weaken his center to shore up his flanks.

The first several moves for the German will be dictated by the Russian placement (i.e., does the Russian create an egg defense, a forward defense, or something else). It is impossible to project my moves at this point, they being dependent on those of my opponent.

My air interdiction units were placed in hexes 3815, 3715 and 2915. This placement means that the Russian first turn reinforcements are slowed down; if the units in Entrance Hex "V,1" move, they are significantly delayed.

For those of you whose only familiarity with PGG is what you have read so far in this issue, a brief look at some of the key tactical points of the game is in order.

The Russian units are unknown. Although the average value of a stack is calculable, the deviation from average is very large. Even more importantly, the Russian army is composed roughly of 10% dummy units that do not absorb casualties.

Zones of Control may not be left except by combat or overruns. It is crucial to preserve some mobile units to react to threats. This is a game that rewards players that keep a reserve.

All German mechanized and motorized units move twice, once before combat and once after. If the German gets even a small hole in the Russian line, his army is built to exploit it. This also means that the German effectively has 20 movement factors per turn for his main striking force. This is to be compared to the maximum of six per turn for the Russian defenders. This mobility differential is important.

The Russians must counter-balance this with efficient use of the rail net and a "look ahead" attitude.

The mechanics of being out of supply greatly reward even valued units as opposed to odd valued units. The Panzer Divisions are composed of three even valued units. If supply is going to be a problem the Panzer Division is twice as strong as a Motorized Division.

There aren't any low odds DEs on the CRT. To eliminate a Russian position tends to demand that it be unable to retreat. This can be done by surrounding it or by attrition. At the odds at which most combat occurs, players will have a choice between losing a step from or retreating the involved unit. The German almost always will opt to retreat. It is very hard to bleed the German player.

If a stack retreats it is retreated by the enemy player; if it takes losses the owning player allocates them. This means that many Soviet defensive positions must accept D2 results as deaths or weaken the second defensive line. Remember that a successful overrun takes the hex regardless of other enemy Zones of Control. Eliminating all the units defending in a hex grants an advance of two hexes and these units are allowed to ignore enemy Zones of Control. On the other hand, the fact that the owning player determines losses means a reinforceable defending stack is always improving; only the weak units die.

A weak position in the line will not hold. There is only one combat phase but one can overrun a unit as many times as he can find units capable of doing it. Losing an overrun defensively will eliminate the Zone of Control, upon which all defense is based. How the German uses these loss-causing opportunities will go a long way toward deciding who will win the game.

Strategically, the key is for the Russian to form a solid line and hold it. One major problem is that this line must be held with very few casualties. Contrary to what one would think the German can win a battle of attrition, if only the attrition is quick enough. A comparison of the Russian and German forces is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Turn	German AF On Board	German Steps On Board	Russian DF On Board	Russian Steps On Board
1	72	26	184	53
2	121	46	220	63
3	278	106	264	76
4	278	106	288	84
5	305	118	312	90
6	323	126	332	95
7	359	142	352	101
8	377	150	372	107
9	395	158	392	113
10	395	158	412	119
11	395	158	432	125
12	395	158	433	125

This table is for illustration only and it should be noted that it is theoretically impossible. This also does not include any SouthWestern reinforcements.

This game was played under Southern California tournament rules. Rather than using the Victory Point totals as listed in the rule book to determine the winner, an open auction system is used. The idea was copied from STORM OVER ARNHEM. This takes the form of bidding a certain number of Victory Points that the German player needs to obtain in order to win. The highest bidder therefore becomes the German player. In the case of this game, Jody needs 68 Victory Points to win. (For comparison purposes, the average bid at the last convention was 62).

## Turn 1

**Russian:** I feel very lucky that I can move both the 19th and the 16th Armies. This helps bolster my defense and I can start defending Smolensk. Since the movement of the 19th Headquarters is allowed, I can save one of my best leaders from the Germans attacking it on the first turn. The Air Interdiction markers are placed where they slow the flow of reinforcements the most, and will keep me "unit poor" at the front for a while. I have made a few mistakes in placement and will correct them next turn. The units in 0525 are not needed there, and the stack of units in 1116 is out of supply. Moving only seven of my eight allowed units by rail is another of my more obvious mistakes.

The Russian is adopting a sacrifice defense in the 0518 region. The big thing to look for will be the cost to the Russians in divisions as compared to the cost in time to the Germans. In this regard, the movement forward of two infantry divisions from 1414 is most suspect. It will increase the cost to the Russian with no apparent delay to the Germans. As a point of interest the Russian only moved seven units by rail. He can and should have moved eight.

**German:** The Russian is capable of moving both 16th Army HQ and 19th Army HQ. This means that I cannot pin KONIEV (19th Army HQ, (5)-10) on game turn one for subsequent elimination. Unfortunately. Due to the Russian placement after the first move, there will be no German attacks this turn. The only thing for me to do is pin some Russian units for later attention.

Using the motorized divisions to pin the Russian units means that my panzer divisions are free to move. I have pinned most of the Russian armor that I could reach. The 20th Panzer guards the 20th Motorized flanks, supply line and retreat route. Except for the 7th Panzer Division, all my units are doubled on defense.

A solid move. Against a sound Russian defense, conservative early moves tend to be best. The Russian at the end of Turn One has forty infantry divisions, six armor divisions, and seven Headquarters. This gives an average attack value of 169 and an average defense value of 184 in 53 steps. The German has five divisions with an average attack value of 72 and defense value of 72 in 26 steps. Aggressive German moves must take this discrepancy into account. The move actually chosen is strong, with all attackable units being unsurroundable except for the 12th Panzer Division. With the 7th Panzer Division screened from all Russians except the armor in 1116, any attack on the 12th Panzer Division is doomed to be frustrated by the 7th Panzer Division.

## Turn 2

**Russian:** His opening move has allowed him to pin several units and threaten my 20th and 13th Headquarters. I will have to move to block him from getting to these units as well as move to impede his

spread north of the 0120-Smolensk road. He has not pinned all of his units, so I must be prepared for him to move around my lines and deeper into my territory.

The units in 0920 will protect the 20th Headquarters for a while, which will keep several units in supply. I should have pulled the 13th Headquarters out and moved it toward Roslavl this turn. The loss of these leaders will hurt later. Maybe the German player will commit a large portion of his forces to eliminating these two Headquarters units. If he does this and it delays his units for a couple of turns, their loss will have been worth it. The reinforcements at Entrance Hex W moved by rail, but the armor unit will be escorted by 24th Headquarters in order to keep it in supply to give it maximum movement. This saves me needed rail movement, which will be used by my infantry units instead. The random unit at Entrance Hex 1 will walk to the front, and should reach it in about three turns.

A spectacularly bad move. The German is given a choice of good moves. He can send 12th Panzer Divisions into Roslavl by moving to 1817 in the movement phase while the 7th and 20th Panzer Divisions kill the Russians in 1116 and, depending on the results of combat, even put a division adjacent to the 13th Headquarters. Or, more conservatively, he can use all three panzer divisions against 1116. The Russian units in 0920 are horribly weak. The units in 0422 are only stacked two high; in the delay defense three-high stacks should be used. The units under the four value leaders are a flaw. Leaders

should have nothing or a stack of three units underneath. Since the leader is worth four defensively when alone, it can be very embarrassing to have a one value unit underneath, thus defending with a strength of one.

**German:** I think that the Russian missed a chance to save four infantry and two armored divisions from the front line area. The four infantry divisions could be moved to the rear by rail movement from the Mogilev-Orsha area and the two unpinned armor units could have left using their movement rate of 10. The 13th Army HQ should also have used rail movement to go to Roslavl to start getting up the defense of the South.

The second turn German reinforcements arrive on map in the north but unfortunately are too far from the front line to reach before the combat phase.

It is possible for the Russian to surround and possibly hurt the 20th Panzer Division on the Russian segment of the next turn, but when the German segment of turn three rolls around the division will be rescued by the German reinforcements. The fact that it pins the Russian 20th Army HQ while 12th Panzer pins the Russian 23rd Army HQ means that these two powerful HQs will not bother me later in the game.

Meanwhile, the 7th Panzer Division and 10th Panzer Division are free to move, thereby causing the Russian player to take them into account during his move.

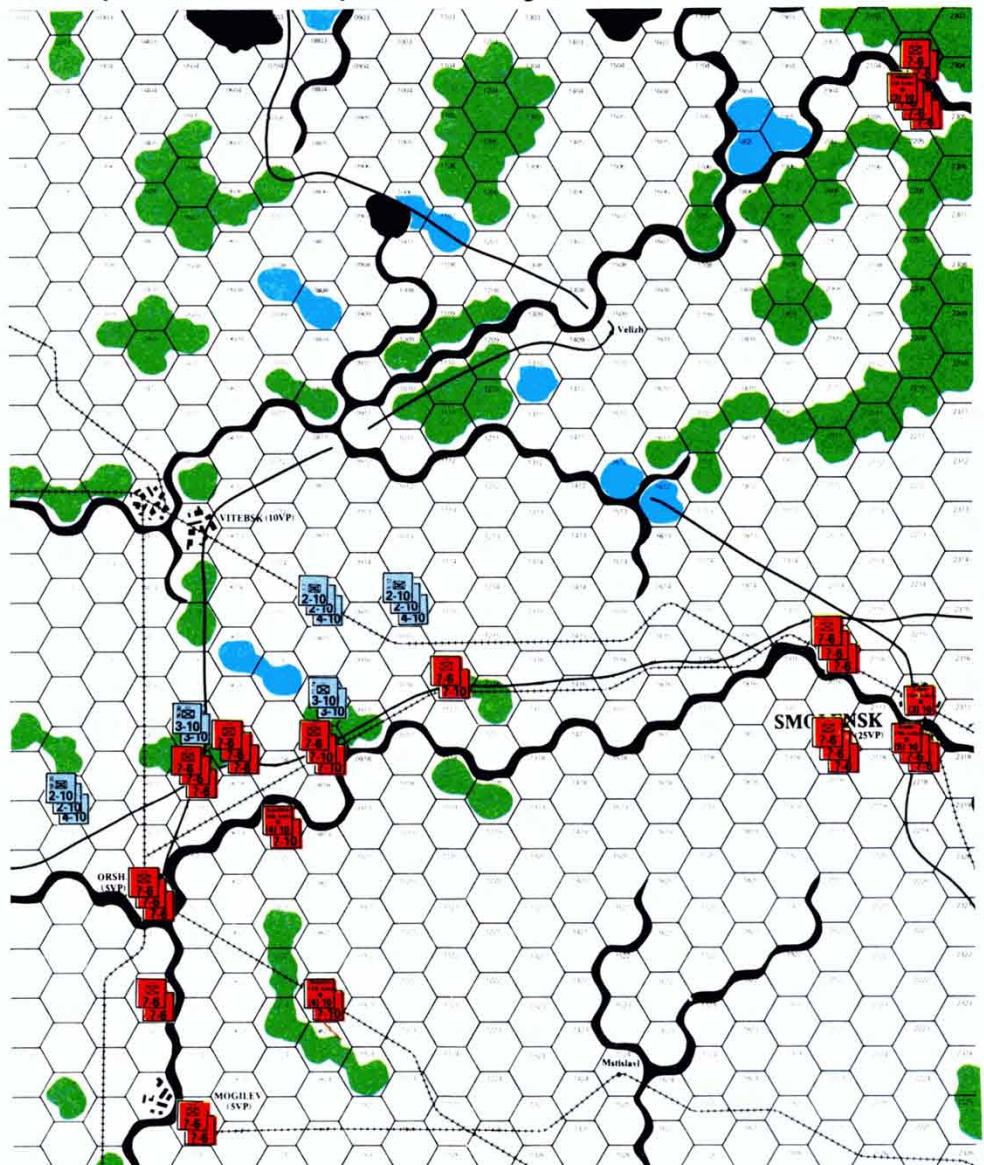


Illustration 1 The situation at the conclusion of the German Mechanized Movement Phase of Turn 1.

The German obviously intends to trap the Russian four value leaders. Not a bad idea, but the three division attack on 1116 offered much the same opportunity with the reward of two dead Russian units. 20th Headquarters is not on a rail line and has no safe haven nearby. It is not necessary to be adjacent to a unit to kill it. Notice that this is another weakness of the Turn 2 Russian move. The 13th Headquarters should have been railroaded to Roslavl, it is not supplying a single unit not already supplied by 20th Headquarters.

Given the German movement phase, mechanized movement is as expected. The only obvious weakness is the failure to pin the units in 0920. The Russian will be able to form five stacks of three units in doubled terrain, and a stack of four in doubled terrain when and if the units in 0422 move to 0822. The German will get more than the usual number of kills for the delay defense, but his lapses this turn means he will take more time than usual as well. All in a good turn in the abstract but not nearly as good as it could have been.

### Turn 3

**Russian:** My defense is not going as well as I would like it to go, but I now have the opportunity to cause him several problems in an area that is rapidly becoming his back lines. The 20th Panzer Division in 0620 can be surrounded and put out of supply. This will cost me several units, and may only cost him one step since he can rescue it with other nearby units. However, the units sent to rescue the 20th Panzer Division would be delayed. Their delay will have justified the sacrifice. Next turn is the major reinforcement turn for the Germans and I must leave no holes for him to exploit with the newly arriving units.

I had several choices to make this turn. Should I pin the 7th Panzer Division, the 19th Panzer Division, or both. I surrounded 20th Panzer Division with only two units. This may turn out to be a mistake, I should have used two stacks of three or no units at all. Orsha out-of-supply is a better hex to hold than a hex in the open with three units in supply, and this was the only hex I could have gotten three units from. I am again seeing my mistake of not withdrawing early enough haunt me. I hope the units left behind will cause several problems for Jody in the next couple of turns, as well as slow his movement.

*The Russian stacks in 0521 and 1021 are simply wrong. Undoubled and unsupplied two-step stacks just provide cannon fodder to the Germans without extracting any reasonable delay. The units in 0521 belong in 0822. The units in 1021 should be, one each, in 1116 and 1216. Given the fact that only two Panzer Divisions are free, the unit that moved by rail into 2525 should have walked instead, allowing another unit from the Vyazma region to rail into Smolensk. All in all, a less than perfect Russian move.*

**German:** This turn will be devoted to killing most of the Russian units in the forward area. 7th Panzer Division will open a supply line to 12th Panzer Division for combat purposes.

I will now kick myself for not attacking hex 0521—the Russian expected value for defense is four and my attack value is 28, giving me an attack of seven to one odds. It is impossible for his unit to survive this attack and the attack would have freed two of my divisions. A very dumb thing to have done. Next turn should see Orsha fall and the road cleared.

*At best, an average move. Lehr and Gross Deutschland are being terribly misused. They should surround units and scout out information. If Gross Deutschland and Das Reich were to trade places with Lehr in 0717, attacking both adjacent hexes (thus allowing the German to use his units efficiently*

on Turn 4), it would be a good move. One other thing to note is the many infantry units heading east, not participating in the early battles unless they are necessary, since needless fighting would slow their arrival against the Smolensk area positions.

*Very poor combat, both in execution and results. The 20th Panzer Division should have advanced to 0719 to prevent the retreat from 0618, and the second attack should have been with the 17th Panzer Division and 29th Motorized Division against the Russian infantry in 0521. The expected odds are 7:1, the worst odds are 3:1.*

But the German has good mechanized movement. The killing overruns were obvious, but not so obvious were the placements of Das Reich and the 19th Panzer Division. If the Russian is careless they pose a threat. If not, they can go back and help clear the road. A good example of German mobility. Also noteworthy is the belated recognition of Lehr and Gross Deutschland's role.

### Turn 4

**Russian:** Several of his units are tied up and will be until next turn. German infantry will not reach the Smolensk lines until this turn, and then there will only be two of them. It looks to me as if Jody is going to send most of his force to Smolensk. This will require me to form my line rather quickly, and will not let it be as complete as I would like it to be.

It does not look like I will do the Germans a lot of damage in combat with what is left of my first defense line. The retreat from hex 0518 means he will have to attack those units again, but this time with better odds. The 6-8-6 in Orsha was a bit of a surprise to both of us, and I hope it will be able to cause him more than the normal delay.

His overrun that was resolved with an A1 generated a small amount of cheer on my part. I split up the German division so that he cannot overrun with that unit during his next movement phase. The finally after all the attacks is pro-German, but it has given me some information on my army. With the two exposed 0-0-6s and the 6-8-6 and the two 5-8-6s, I know that there are only six 0-0-6s left and five units with an eight defense left. This means that the line around Smolensk is populated by many average units and a few good ones.

After noticing that the German infantry can get to my Smolensk line this turn, I refused to do anything about it. I shuffled the 16th Headquarters from Smolensk to Roslavl and the 30th Headquarters from hex 4012 to Smolensk. These Headquarters, along with the others, can keep my Smolensk line in supply. If the 13th Headquarters had been moved to Roslavl earlier, then I would not have to do all of this shuffling. I did make a mistake in not allowing for the German infantry's arrival. The area between Smolensk and Roslavl is not going to be penetrated by him without a lot of work. This was done at the expense of my northern line. I hope he will consider the terrain unfavorable and not attack. My line does not stretch far enough north to block a flanking maneuver. There are not enough units in Roslavl, so the units coming from the rear will have to fill in here and the north.

*A good solid move. The defensive line from 2013 to 2325 is firm and backed by a solid line. However, there are some points to criticize. The five value leader in Smolensk belongs on the northern flank. The northern forest is far too weakly held. The far south also is too weak and the Russian line is very vulnerable to casualties because of the large number of undoubled positions attackable from three hexes. A defense line using hexes 2011, 2013, 2015, 2216, 2217, 2418, 2420, 2422, 2424 and 2527 with backers at 2212, 2214, 2521, 2523, 2624 and 2626 would use as many troops as this line but would have less hexes exposed to potential high odds attacks. All in all, however, this is by far the best Russian move since Turn 1.*

**German:** It was nice of the Russian to let my two infantry divisions attack his front line this turn. I will attack hex 2013 to apply leverage on the road. I will not use the infantry divisions to attack hex 2015 because the panzer units which attack with them would be across the river if and when it came time to overrun.

Bad luck in the forest as Stance was able to retreat his armor onto his 8-8-6 in their other section of the forest; this means still another turn to clear the road in the forest.

*A well done move which kills most of the delaying units and begins the attrition in the Smolensk area. One improvement would have been to send a small force to the 1609 area to threaten the northern flank but this can be done in mechanized movement if need be.*

*The attack on 0718 was probably a mistake. There was a one-third chance of creating a stack with a defense value of 22 in hex 0617. By ignoring 0718 it was possible to guarantee that the road would be clear on Turn 5. Now Jody will have to fight for it since the Russian knows what's there.*

*I still think Lehr would prove a more dangerous threat farther north. The known Russian units in 2013 should have been pinned. If the Russian is bright they will become the lynch-pins of his Smolensk defense. The German player does a good job of threatening both sides of the Dnepr, while allowing almost all the armor to be free to exploit any success.*

### Turn 5

**Russian:** My front line defense has now fallen, almost on schedule. He saw the error in my lines and will now exploit, but I will try to stop him if he doesn't get too far in the Mechanized Movement Phase. Jody looks as if he is avoiding the Smolensk-Roslavl road defense and is building up just for the area around Smolensk. If he eliminates the Smolensk defense too early the game is forfeited.

Last turn ended a little in my favor. I still have a nice stack in hex 0617 (the forest road). Despite the limited access to Smolensk, I can still get units in there this turn to help defend. This will be my last chance so I need to make the best of it. He conveniently exposed a 2-6-6 and a 3-5-6 earlier and did not pin them, so I can move them to Smolensk. I cannot do everything I wanted to do because of the shortage of leaders and units. I built up my line, but I have left several weak points. I have a stack in 2328 that is out of supply; the stack in 2210 should be in 2209 (a far better position from which to antagonize the German). My biggest mistake may be not backing up my line at 2418; with the three available panzer units he could eliminate that stack and completely surround Smolensk. This gives him a very good chance of destroying the stack in 2220, and exploiting through 2419 to the rear of my lines, or deeper still to the eastern board edge.

*What a horrible turn! The Russian player would have been better off if he had not moved a single unit. Certainly, the key mistake is the gapping hole behind the units in 2220. If they go, the Germans can cut the Vyazma-Smolensk rail with Lehr in mechanized movement. The Russian is still weak on both flanks, but strategically this is where he can most afford it. The weakness in the center is the crucial one.*

**German:** A Russian mistake! He does not have a double line south of Smolensk. If I breakthrough at hex 2220, I can isolate Smolensk. The attacks are set and the 14th Motorized and the 18th Motorized will help exploit in the south. The road will be cleared this turn!

I will clear the forest in hex 0617 to open a supply line for a breakthrough to isolate Smolensk. Then I will overrun the unit in hex 2112 to gain space and free three infantry divisions for use next

turn. Next on the hit parade is the overrunning of hex 2118 with a motorized division to free a panzer division for exploitation of the hole to be created by overrunning the units in hexes 2319 and 2419.

But after my die rolls there were too many (three) failed overruns to truly show a breakthrough exploitation. Still, it's enough to isolate Smolensk from being reinforced.

*Trying to take advantage of all the weaknesses. The German might be better off if he concentrated all his mechanized units except Lehr in the 2319 gap region and let the forces along the road provide the northern threat. Good attack on 2118 and 2220 is very strong, but if 2118 is weak the path gained to 2219 might well make the difference.*

*Jody's retreat of the Russians in 2220 was poorly done. If both units had been placed in 2419 instead, exploitation would be significantly easier. The failure to concentrate against the 2319 gap area is now apparent. The upcoming overruns are crucial to the Russian defense.*

*"Hey diddle diddle, right up to the middle." With this move Smolensk is a plum waiting to be plucked by the Germans. The exploitation, although basically solid, is flawed. The 14th Motorized Infantry would be much stronger in 2519. This would prohibit the Russian from placing a stack of three U-10 units in 2518 that, combined with Smolensk, forces German units moving north or south to do so west of Smolensk. In addition the powerful pin on Das Reich greatly limits German threats next turn. Notice how the German is using the breakthrough south of the Dnepr to form a pocket north of the Dnepr.*

## Turn 6

**Russian:** With all the damage he is doing to my line I am surprised I still have one. The armor unit in Roslavl will have to move north to fill in the gaps, but this leaves me with a weakened defense of Roslavl. I will have to move some units down there next turn, before he attacks.

The units in hex 0617 did hold out so this limits his effort to penetrate my line too deeply because of supply restrictions. I did not retreat the stack in 2112 because he will now have to overrun the remaining unit at no better than 2-to-1, which could slow him down a little. I did accept the retreat in 2220, however, because it filled a gap in the line and frees other units to move elsewhere.

The German has created a *very big hole* and I will have to fill it fast. I have to do this while still maintaining the defense of Vyazma and Roslavl. I have dropped my line several hexes back and formed a new line that reaches along the Vop River to the Iput and on southward to Roslavl. My entire line is in supply, and with the added defense of the Urga River and the forest from 3319 to 3522 most of the line is in hexes that double defend when attacked.

*Weak. The Russian is abandoning 25 steps (not counting those in 2207) to the German. It should take only one turn for the German to kill approxi-*

*mately 20 of these, and it is very possible to kill all of them by the end of combat in Turn 7. The Russian only has 42 steps not at hazard this turn. This attrition simply will not allow the Russian to defend in depth. Stance was correct in that most of the involved units are dead, but was wrong to let them die so easily. For comparison, my defensive line in the north would have been three U-6s in 2112, 2114, 2116, 2615; two U-6s and a U-10 in 2210; one U-6 each in 2409, 2207, 2412, 2212. When combined with three unknown mechanized units in 2518, three U-6s in 2520, 2420, 2422, 2526, and two more in 2628 as the first line of my southern front, it becomes obvious the "dead" units in the immediate Smolensk region are being put to much better use. Of course, it certainly is easier to see this sort of move in analysis, as opposed to during play.*

**German:** The Russian missed his opportunity to really hammer 7th Panzer Division, and while he sealed the breakthrough in the south he has allowed me to butcher his units in the north. I will use three infantry divisions to overrun hex 2212 and then pour through this gap to surround the units in the north. My southern drive will have to be put on a back burner for the time being. Minor note in the first overrun, I have a 50-50 chance to continue moving after the overrun to aid in the attack on hex 2315 (but this plan was spoiled by the die roll).

The attack into hex 2114 shows the strength of a German combined attack force. Where it is necessary that a panzer division not be split, due to the wish to use it later in an overrun perhaps, an adverse combat result should be taken by some unit that is expendable rather than taking the retreat that would split the armored division.

I do have a annoying problem in that my southern position is under-defended and over-committed. I should make some effort to get uncommitted units into the region.

*Not very well handled. One obvious mistake was failure to notice the supply line from 2216 to 2212. A unit in 2014 would have made it a 6:1 overrun.*

*Far worse, however, was the concept of overrunning the unit in 2212 at all. An infantry division in 2110, Lehr in 2311, and Das Reich in 2314 along with the attacks on Smolensk and 2114 would have isolated and surrounded all of the attacked Russians north of the Dnepr. This would have allowed the 14th Motorized Division to go to 2519 after 2318 had been overrun and—combined with a move by Gross Deutschland to 2521 and a panzer division in 2321—would allow speedy elimination of the Russian units in 2420 and 2520. The move the German did make does have the advantage of gaining possible DEs versus 2114 and 2314 but has the disadvantage of not killing the southern Russian units and does not maximize the attack on Smolensk. The out-of-supply Russians in undoubled terrain are easily killable in one turn; only the units in Smolensk pose a danger of a long delay. An attacking unit in 2218 is definitely needed.*

*The German attacks went very much as expected. The German should have attacked 2217 before he attacked 2216, however; lowering 2217 from four to three steps would be very useful for his next turn.*

*In his mechanized movement, Jody makes a strong attempt to turn the northern flank. One bad error on his part is the failure to pin the units in 3012. If the 14th Motorized Infantry was in 3011 and Lehr was in 3109, the gap between the forests at 2908 would be open and the panzer divisions could pour through. The German also left the Russian with the southern defense mentioned earlier, hex 2518 still divides the battlefield. Note that if the Russian holds 2518 there are no free units in the south other than Gross Deutschland and 1st Cavalry Division. This would allow the German mistakes of failing to kill the units in 2420 and not attacking 2217 to be exploited to the fullest. The Russian player must come up with a good move or his lack of depth will prove fatal.*

## Turn 7

**Russian:** The way I expect Jody to attack is to overrun the lone units to get them out of his way. He will attack the units surrounding Smolensk and the units in 2420. The units in the north in hexes 2207 and 2210 should also be attacked this turn, he needs the unit they have pinned. Smolensk should not fall until next turn. All this means is that he will not be attacking my line and this should give me a chance to reform. But . . . I have been proven wrong in what actions I thought he would take in past games often enough. He has extended himself thin on both of his flanks; I will be able to use it against him.

Now is the time for some offensive action on my part. The German has overextended in the north and has left two very exposed units holding his southern flank. I will pin Gross Deutschland and attack the 1st Cavalry Division. Neither attack exposes my line to any danger this turn, and may cause the German to commit heavily to stop my attack from becoming a counteroffensive in force. The attack on Lehr eases the pressure on my northern line and removes one of the German's mobile units. I will occupy Rzhev in order to deny the German an easy five Victory Points. This, along with putting the reinforcements from Entrance Hex X along the rail line between Vyazma and Rzhev, will insure that several of my units can get to the front lines next turn. The Random Reinforcement at Entrance Hex 6 will go forward by rail and repair the rail break at hex 1125. If he does not answer this, I can use that line to transport a unit to some of the cities on the western edge and recapture them.

Successful attacks force him to respond. I have seven units with a leader almost behind the German lines. In the north he can easily go through, but I am betting he will respond to the attack in the south—which will let me reinforce the northern defense. The German will soon have to worry about

### Air Interdiction and Reinforcements

Turn	German	Russian	Reinforcements
0	4015,3916,3414	—	—
1	4015,3916,2915	—	2
2	4015,3916,2915	—	1
3	4015,3916,2915	—	2
4	4015,3916,2915	—	6
5	3916,3916,2915	—	1
6	3916,3815,3515	—	5
7	4015,3815,3515	—	6
8	5907,5807,5707	0120	4
9	5907,5807,5707	0120	4
10	4420,3704,3604	0120	5
11	4714,4614,4608	—	3
12	—	—	4

### German Gains

Vitebsk	10 points (Turn 2)
Mogilev	5 points (Turn 3)
Orsha	5 points (Turn 4)
Smolensk	25 points (Turn 8)
Yel'nya	10 points (Turn 10)
Rzhev	5 points (Turn 10)
Hex 5915	20 points (Turn 12)
Eight South-Western Reinforcements	11 points (Turn 2, 10 and 12)
19th Panzer Division eliminated	-5 points
	86 points Total Victory Points

his supply lines. I have to generate several pockets of resistance to block them.

*This is a move of which the Russian player can be proud. Advantage is taken of the German mistakes of Turn 6, and preparation to meet a major German thrust in the north is made. The units in Rzhev are worth their weight in gold! The center of the Russian defense is masterful; four tripled positions allow the luxury of a weak to non-existent second line. The only portion of the move that can be questioned is the elimination of 1st Cavalry Division as opposed to a solid defense along the 24th hexrow. But, it must be admitted that even this is more a matter of taste rather than doctrine. With this move the Russian player begins to turn the tide, but the lack of units to construct a second line, especially south of the Dnepr, still makes the German the favorite to win.*

**German:** The situation in the south has greatly deteriorated and Smolensk must be taken quickly in order to free divisions and a supply path to the south. During movement, the overruns in the northeast went well (though I could wish for something bigger than a 0-0-6 to have been in the northwest).

My first combat was a disaster; the rest were nice. Smolensk will be cleared next turn, thereby allowing air interdiction units to be placed east of Vyazma which will cause some slowing of Russian reinforcements. In the north three panzer divisions are now free to move and in the south there is one unpinned panzer division; these divisions will give me something to react with to the next Russian move.

In the southwest I must beat the Russian to the cities of Orsha and Mogilev with game turn eight's reinforcements.

Gross Deutschland is in serious trouble but is expendable. The hole between Gross Deutschland and hex 2715 is not as serious as it seems because he has no units that can exploit the hole and cause me serious problems.

*The German has made a move to break the northern flank. As the German needs 25 more Victory Points to win the game, the obvious threat is to take Vyazma, Rzhev, and Gzhatsk. The units sent north are not sufficient to do this. Another possibility is to split the panzers and send the force around Smolensk to the south, take Yel'nya and attempt to pinch Vyazma. The great power of hexes 2518 and 2217 splitting the board into two distinct parts is very well shown. Given the northern attack by the Germans, it is a serious mistake not to have strung the arriving infantry out along the road and send back an infantry unit to 0518, which would serve as a supply source and allow the Germans to continue to push. There are too many forests in the north to push the attack home with unsupplied units.*

The hole in the German line in 2517 is not important; the Russians lack the units to take advantage. What is important is Jody's failure to use the northern flank forces properly. There are two possibilities; one is a strong drive with the 10th Panzer Division (in 3902) and Das Reich (in 3904) with the 20th and 19th Panzer Divisions as far forward as possible, using the 14th Motorized Infantry to pin hex 3309 and moving the 18th Panzer Division and the other four strong formations into 2911 where they will be in supply on Turn 8. They then threaten to hit the north if it is weakened or drive up the gap between the Dnepr and Ugha at Vyazma.

The German play in the southern sector also seems mishandled. If the 18th Motorized Infantry was in 2419 and the 10th Motorized Infantry was in 2617 along with the rest, the Russians would have nine fewer mobile steps to operate with in the south. The next German breakthrough will obviously be in this area as it is very hard to reinforce. The Air Inter-

diction markers should have been used in 3824, 3925, and 4025 to magnify this difficulty.

## Turn 8

**Russian:** I am surprised he is not making any attacks in the south. He is attacking in the north instead, but not with enough force. I can now readily attack Gross Deutschland but I do not think I will, because it would give him a chance to pin some of my few mobile units. I need to reform my line in the south and bolster it in the north. Now that he has repositioned his Air Interdiction markers, it will delay my ability to bring my reinforcements forward and develop balanced defenses.

In order to slow the movement of the German forces I will use my own Interdiction Marker in hex 0120. In the south, I expect to lose the armor and the infantry, but I will have repaired the rail break for future use. My Vop line will hold long enough for me to bolster it, and maybe counterattack. The major problem I have this turn is that I am short of HQs. My earlier mistakes in this game are beginning to show.

*This move gives the German a great chance to win. The Russian stack in 2420 is attackable at 2:1 odds. If this stack loses even one step, it can be overrun at 1:1 odds by full strength panzer divisions in*

*the area that are guaranteed to be free in the Mechanized Movement Phase. A better defense in the south would be to have the two four-strength units and a U-6 in 2420, along with 24th Headquarters with two U-6 units in 2521. If Reserve Headquarters goes to 2819, this allows the 24th Headquarters to die without placing 2420 out of supply! The south is secure for another turn. In addition, the units in hex 2327 would be stronger in 2527 without creating any weakness elsewhere.*

*The Russian lack of high value reserves is especially noticeable in the northern flank area. This being the case, the Russian has misused the 22nd Headquarters. The two hexes it supplies are tripled and cannot be attacked strongly this turn anyway. If 22nd Headquarters had gone to 3311, it would have freed 29th Headquarters for the northern flank. This allows the flank to be defended as follows: two U-6s in 3708, two U-6s in 3705, a U-6 in 3703, 29th Headquarters in 3907, 28th Headquarters in 3804 and a U-6 in 3901. Assuming average defensive values, the highest odds attacks against any of these positions is only 4:1. With the hole in the north closed for the turn, the Russian reinforcements can move by rail to Vyazma instead of Gzhatsk. Note that even without the hole closed, those units belong in Vyazma. The Germans cannot reach Gzhatsk in one turn while out of supply.*

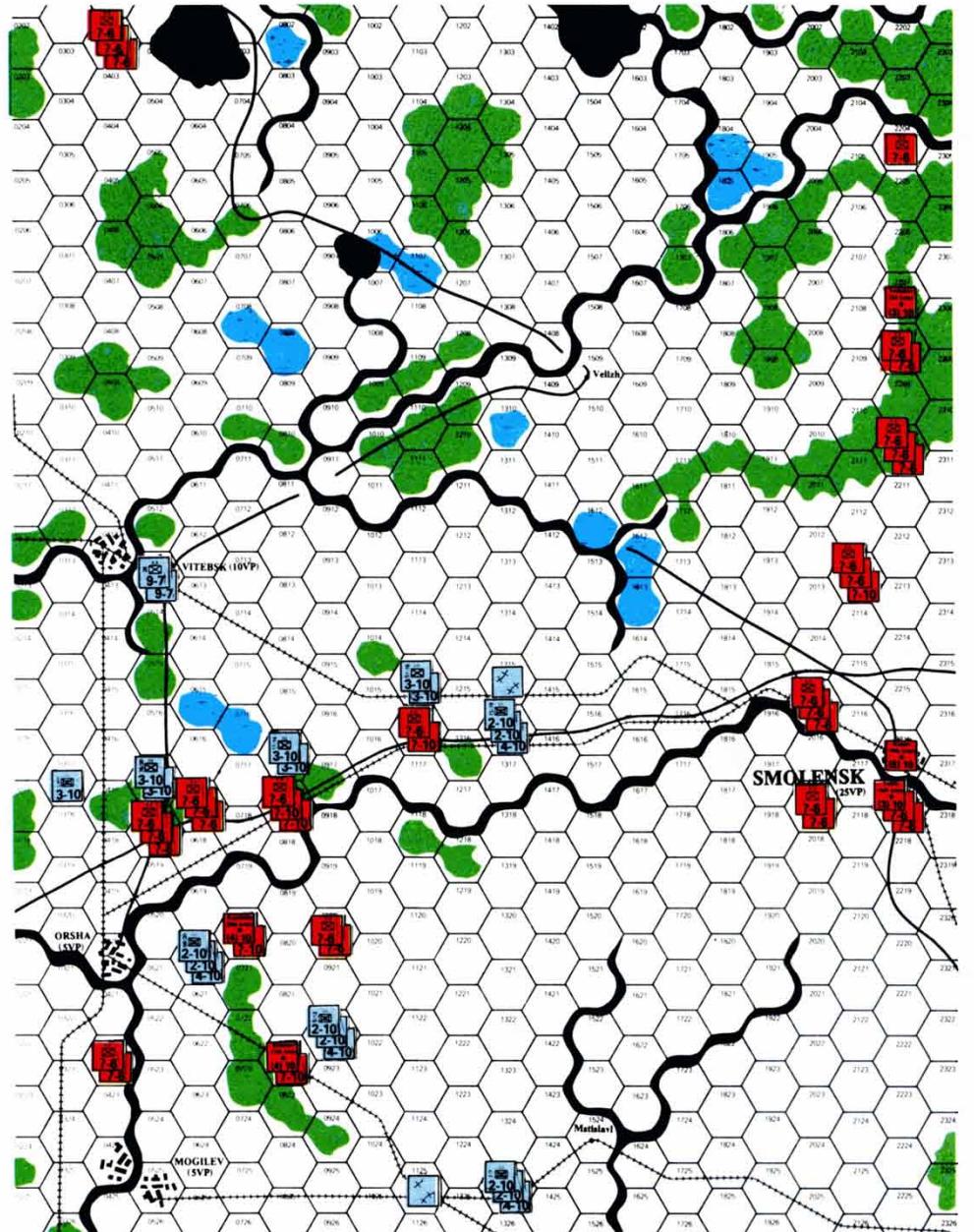


Illustration 2 The situation at the conclusion of the German Mechanized Movement Phase of Turn 2.

**German:** The cowardly Communist quiche-eater has used his partisan unit for the first time. This will put a serious crimp in my plans in the far northeast and the deep southeast.

I was going to use 17th Panzer Division to help the 18th Motorized attack the Russian units in hex 2420, via an overrun at three-to-one; and because now the Russian does not have a second line, he must take losses rather than retreat. Unfortunately, I received a split result thereby aborting the rest of the plan (which would have given me a four-to-one and been guaranteed one kill and a fifty percent shot at two). This would have allowed me to overrun the remnant and given me an exploitable hole through which to pour the units freed by eliminating the Smolensk garrison. My moving an infantry division into Orsha was a mistake, I should have moved it into the hex in front of Orsha (i.e., hex 0521).

My attack was a TRUE disaster! I hoped to infiltrate his line by D1s, and the attack on his 8-10 with a die roll of six was the last thing that I needed at this time.

The two panzer divisions in the north are primarily a diversion since the main breakthrough is in the south where I have punched a hole. My infantry divisions in Smolensk will march down to Roslavl to take out the Russian units ahead; by game

turn ten or eleven, my infantry will hopefully be in position to attack Roslavl. I have pinned most of the units that can plug the breakthrough although I have had to gamble the 18th Motorized (which could be surrounded, overrun to cause a one step loss and then attacked, given a D2 result—thereby killing it).

I am sorry that Gross Deutschland found so big a stack defending and then rolled so badly. First, because I hate to lose any units, especially a “free” unit (i.e., one that can be lost at no cost in victory points) which could have been used later to nobly sacrifice itself in order to save a panzer division’s freedom of movement late in the game. And secondly, because it lets me pin one less stack of Russian units.

The rail cut in hex 2920 will keep the Russian from cutting off the 4th Panzer Division. Because of the loss of 19th Panzer Division I now need twenty-six more Victory Points, which can be supplied by taking Roslavl, Yel’nya, and Vyazma (for a total of 35 Victory Points).

*The southern area is very well played. The northern flank is mishandled. There was no good reason to put the 19th Panzer Division in hex 3408. It is vitally important to maintain concentration of effort with the German mechanized formations. This is not being done. Look at the result: the Russian has*

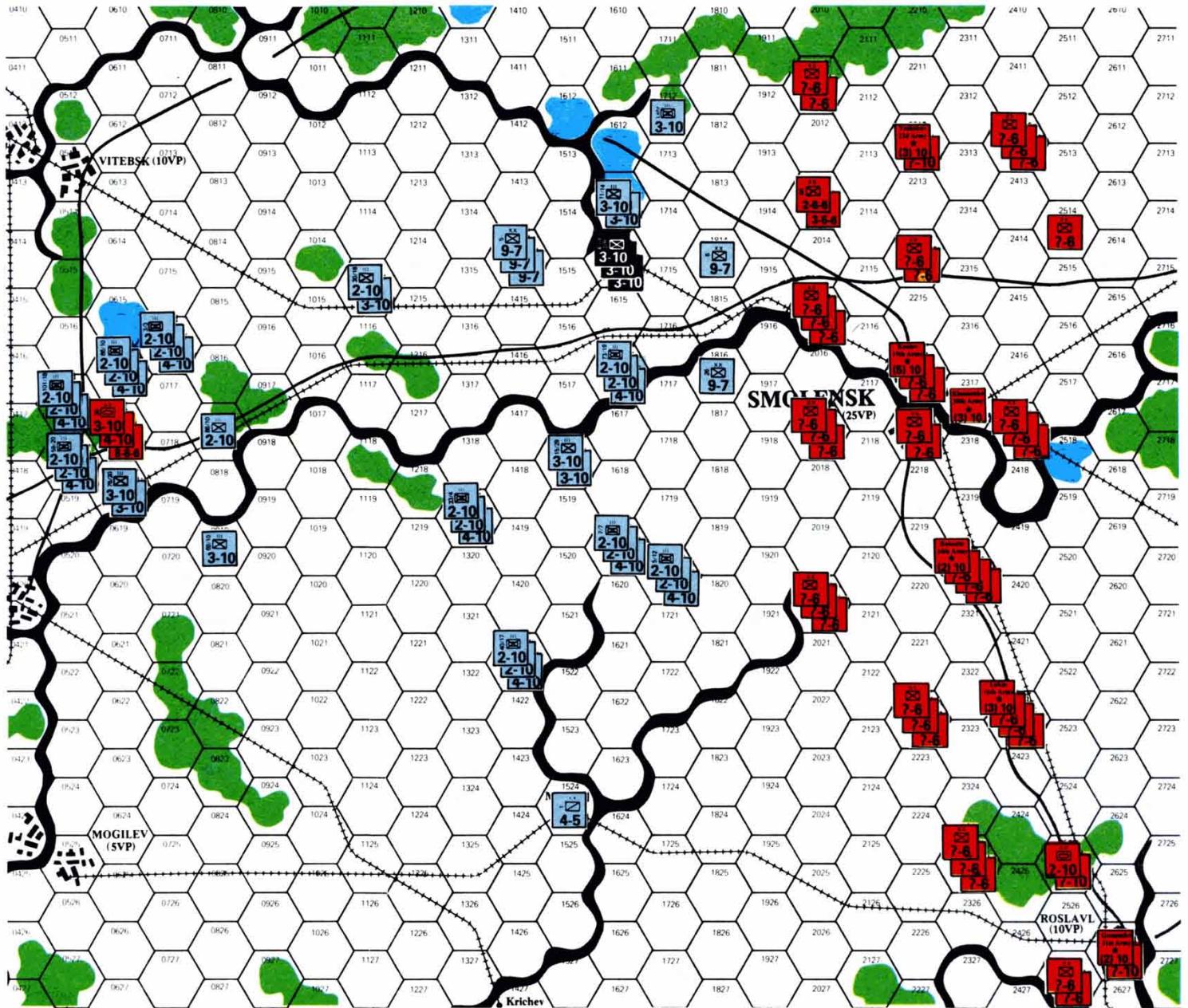
*almost totally won the battle between mobility and a static defense in this sector.*

*The German infantry should be sent to help clear the south. The units in 2216 are properly placed as it is imperative to get the 7:1 against Smolensk; but the units in 2116 belong in 1919. Placing the arriving infantry in hexes 0120 and 0219 would guarantee supply to 2218, the hex the infantry in 2216 should advance into after combat, next turn.*

*The failure to advance the infantry south of the Dnepr in the attack on Smolensk is a bad play. The way the Russian took the loss in the attack on 2420 is very interesting. It leaves the hex with a smaller defense but forces the German to have a unit in 2419 to place it out of supply. This could easily force the first stack overrunning from 2410 to take a loss rather than retreat or leave the second stack vulnerable to an A2. This is a good move by Stance.*

*The truly horrible move during combat was the attack on 3409. Although the intent is obviously to allow pressure against 3309 and possibly 3610, the attack had far too much to risk for such small gain. Even ignoring the five Victory Points lost, the lack of ability to now concentrate in the north dooms that flank. The only city in the north with with a good*

Illustration 3 The situation at the conclusion of the German Mechanized Movement Phase of Turn 4.



chance to fall to the Germans is Rzhev and it probably will not.

The attack by Gross Deutschland, although at poor odds, was a clever one. The deep exploitation possible, after 2420 is overrun, is much more powerful with Gross Deutschland and a panzer division. Although two divisions would be more powerful still it is unlikely the German has enough units in the area to allow this.

Solid German exploitation in the south during Mechanized Movement salvages something. But it would have been much stronger not to pin Roslavl and use the 7th Panzer Division in 2918 instead of the 18th Motorized Infantry. Units in 2918 are very vulnerable to a counterattack. This would allow the 18th Motorized Infantry to go to 3119. This, in turn, would provide a threat to Vyazma and to reaching 3611 to help free up the northern flank.

In the north, the 18th Panzer Division leaves itself vulnerable to a pin from hex 4108. This gives the Russian a much stronger position defensively; only two free German units in the north. Note that the Russian units in 3708 can be surrounded by Das Reich but if they are much above average it would be a 1:2 attack.

## Turn 9

**Russian:** I have the advantage now of an extra five Victory Points with the death of the 19th Panzer Division. Having Gross Deutschland eliminate itself helps a lot and lets me move those units that were pinned by it. But I should have attacked Gross Deutschland instead of letting it attack me. If I had attacked it last turn the German would have had to respond to my large group of mobile units. These mobile units could have made it to Smolensk and cut his line of supply. The stack in 2420 is holding a critical hex; if he eliminates them he can pour through my middle toward Vyazma and the east edge hexes.

He did not pin all the units around Roslavl in his mechanized movement. This leaves me with several units, whose values I know, with which I can defend Roslavl. I will also use these units to pin some of the German units. He may regret using the 18th Motorized Infantry to pin my units, if I can get any units next to it to attack it next turn. The units in my rear must be pinned as soon as possible. I must also fill in the hole he made. I will have to use my Interdiction Marker until I have all the mobile units in my back field pinned.

I am using the Interdiction Marker to slow the northern attack. When those units are all pinned I will not have to worry about them. I have moved several units to Roslavl to help its defense. My defense is now centered around Roslavl, Vyazma and Gzhatsk. The loss of a division by the German allows me to bring on some of my south-western reinforcements onboard to help around Vyazma. I moved the unit in hex 0924 to 1025 because it will tie up the two enemy 9-7 infantry units and keep them from getting deeper into the south.

Very, very bad. The German will win if he takes Roslavl, Yel'nya and Rzhev. The two southern cities are fairly easy to take, leaving only Rzhev as difficult. But the Russian vacates it and leaves the 10th Motorized Infantry unpinning! A much stronger move would be to railroad the 49th Headquarters to 4309, leave 28th HQ in Rzhev, use 31st HQ in 3906, and pin the 10th Motorized Infantry with the 8-10 from 3407. Another alternative was to send the 8-10 to hex 2917 after attempting to overrun the 18th Motorized Infantry from 3017. This would not have been a high probability attack, but given the actual units could easily have worked. The 8-10 could not go south if the overrun failed.

The key lesson of this turn was the taking of the additional SouthWestern Front reinforcements. This was the decision that makes the above paragraph true. If the Russian ignored them, the German would

## COMBAT RESULTS

### Series Replay PanzerGruppe Guderian

#### German Turn 3 Combat

- 1) Attackers: 19th and 20th Panzer Divisions (32 factors)  
0720 Defenders: 1-10, 20th Headquarters out of supply (1 factor)  
Odds: 10 to 1 Die Roll: 2 Result: DE  
20th Panzer Division advances into 0720.
- 2) Attackers: Lehr, Gross Deutschland, 4th and 3rd Panzer Divisions (39 factors)  
0420 Defenders: 4-4-6, 0-0-6, 6-8-6 out of supply (12 factors)  
Odds: 3 to 1 Die Roll: 5 Result: D1/A1  
Russian 4-4-6 eliminated.  
German retreats to 0319: Lehr, Gross Deutschland; to 0220: 12/4, 33/4; to 0221: 35/4; to 0322: 3/3, 394/3; to 0422: 6/3.
- 3) Attackers: 20th Motorized infantry, 10th and 18th Panzer Divisions (44 factors)  
0518 Defenders: 6-6-6, 0-0-6, 5-8-6 out of supply (14 factors)  
Odds: 3 to 1 Die Roll: 2 Result: D2  
Russian retreats to 0718.  
20th Motorized Infantry advances to 0618.
- 4) Attackers: Das Reich, 7th Panzer Division (34 factors)  
0822 Defenders: 5-10, 13th Headquarters out of supply (4 factors)  
Odds: 8 to 1 Die Roll: 2 Result: DE  
Das Reich advances to 0822.
- 5) Attackers: 12th Panzer Division (16 factors)  
1021 Defenders: 1-4-6, 5-8-6 (6 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 1 Result: D2  
Russian retreats to 1222: 1-4-6; to 1019: 5-8-6.

#### German Turn 3 Mechanized Movement Overruns

- 1) Attackers: 7th Panzer Division from 1122 (8 factors)  
1122 Defenders: 1-4-6 out of supply & surrounded (2 factors)  
Odds: 4 to 1 Die Roll: 1 Result: D2  
Russian eliminated.
- 2) Attackers: 12th Panzer Division from 0920 (8 factors)  
1019 Defenders: 5-8-6 out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: A1  
German retreats to 0820: 5/12, 25/12; to 0921: 29/12.
- 3) Attackers: 19th Panzer Division from 0920 (8 factors)  
1019 Defenders: 5-8-6 out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 1 Result: D2  
Russian eliminated.

#### German Turn 4 Combat

- 1) Attackers: Das Reich, Lehr, 6th and 26th Infantry Divisions (39 factors)  
2013 Defenders: 3-5-6, 2-6-6, 1-3-6 (14 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 3 Result: D1/A1  
Russian 1-3-6 eliminated.  
German retreats to 1812: 2/DR, 3/DR; to 1813: 4/DR, 6th Infantry Division; to 1814: 26th Infantry Division, Lehr.
- 2) Attackers: 18th Motorized Infantry, 19th Panzer Division (28 factors)  
1117 Defenders: 2-4-6, 5-10 out of supply (8 factors)  
Odds: 3 to 1 Die Roll: 3 Result: D1  
Russian 2-4-6 eliminated.
- 3) Attackers: 17th Panzer Division, 29th Motorized Infantry (28 factors)  
0521 Defenders: 3-4-6, 1-3-6 out of supply (3 factors)  
Odds: 9 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: DE/A1  
German retreats to 0523: 63/17, 40/17; to 0622: 39/17, 71/29; to 0722: 15/29.

- 4) Attackers: 4th and 3rd Panzer Divisions (32 factors)  
 0420 Defenders: 6-8-6 out of supply (8 factors)  
 Odds: 4 to 1 Die Roll: 1 Result: D2  
 Russian retreats to 0620.  
 German advances 4th Panzer Division to 0521 taking Orsha.
- 5) Attackers: 10th, 18th, and 20th Panzer Divisions, 20th Motorized Infantry (60 factors)  
 0617 Defenders: 8-8-6, 4-6-6, 1-2-6 out of supply (16 factors)  
 Odds: 3 to 1 Die Roll: 1 Result: D2  
 Russian 1-2-6 and 4-6-6 eliminated.
- 6) Attackers: 10th Motorized Infantry, 12th Panzer Division (28 factors)  
 0718 Defenders: 5-8-6, 6-6-6 out of supply (7 factors)  
 Odds: 4 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: Eng  
 Russian 6-6-6 eliminated.  
 German 86/10 reduced to a 2-10.
- 7) Attackers: 14th Motorized Infantry, 7th Panzer Division, Gross Deutschland (32 factors)  
 0817 Defenders: 4-10, 3-10 out of supply (6 factors)  
 Odds: 5 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: D2/A1  
 Russian units retreat to 0617.  
 German retreats to 0815: 53/14; to 0916: 11/14, 25/7; to 1017: 6/7, 7/7; to 1018: Gross Deutschland.

#### German Turn 4 Mechanized Movement Overruns

- 1) Attackers: 10th Motorized Infantry from 0818 (5 factors)  
 0718 Defenders: 5-8-6 out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)  
 Odds: 1 to 1 Die Roll: 3 Result: D1/A1  
 Russian eliminated.  
 German retreats to 0817: 86/10; to 0819: 69/10.
- 2) Attackers: 4th Panzer Division from 0521 (8 factors)  
 0620 Defenders: 6-8-6 out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)  
 Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 1 Result: D2  
 Russian eliminated.
- 3) Attackers: 18th Motorized Infantry from 1115 (6 factors)  
 1116 Defenders: 5-10 out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)  
 Odds: 1 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: Eng  
 Russian eliminated.  
 German 30/18 reduced to a 2-10.

#### German Turn 5 Combat

- 1) Attackers: 18th, 10th, 20th, and 3rd Panzer Divisions, 20th Motorized Infantry, 10th Motorized Infantry (-) (86 factors)  
 0617 Defenders: 3-10, 4-10, 8-8-6 out of supply (14 factors)  
 Odds: 6 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: D2  
 Russian 4-10 and 3-10 eliminated.
- 2) Attackers: 19th Panzer Division 6th, 26th, 5th, 35th, and 161st Infantry Divisions (61 factors)  
 2112 Defenders: 1-3-6, 2-3-6, 2-4-6 (10 factors)  
 Odds: 6 to 1 Die Roll: 2 Result: D2  
 Russian 1-3-6 and 2-3-6 eliminated.
- 3) Attackers: 4th and 17th Panzer Divisions, 29th Motorized Infantry (44 factors)  
 2118 Defenders: 2-2-6, 2-3-6, 4-3-6 (8 factors)  
 Odds: 5 to 1 Die Roll: 1 Result: D2  
 Russian 2-2-6 and 2-3-6 eliminated.
- 4) Attackers: 12th and 7th Panzer Divisions, Das Reich (50 factors)  
 2220 Defenders: 0-0-6, 2-4-6, 3-4-6 (8 factors)  
 Odds: 6 to 1 Die Roll: 3 Result: D2  
 Russian retreats to 2419: 2-4-6; to 2319: 3-4-6.  
 German advances 12th Panzer Division to 2320.

need 30, not 25, Victory Points to win. I feel very strongly that they should have not been taken.

Having taken the reinforcements, it does not matter as much; but the reinforcements that arrived at Area 4 should have railroaded to 3724. The Roslav-hex 5915 road can easily become a German highway and a block is necessary. Another point worth noting is the placement of the Air Interdiction in 0120, 0219 which increases the movement point cost to the edge and does not help the German supply. Should have caught this last turn as well.

**German:** How neat! The Russian has taken four SouthWest Front reinforcements, which means that I now only need Vyazma and Roslav or Yel'nya—or Roslav, Yel'nya and one five-point city other than Roslav, Yel'nya and Vyazma.

His gambit was only partially taken and 18th Motorized still lives and hopefully will be saved. I am sorry that hex 2518 was so big defensively, but, oh well, I will overrun the hex in the Mechanized Movement Phase. Other combat was as I expected.

During the Mechanized Movement Phase, I move to kill Reserve HQ and start killing units in front of Roslav and maybe take Yel'nya. I did kill the units in hex 2519; but, unfortunately I lost two steps doing it. However, I now have three free mechanized units in the south which will perhaps allow me to break his position in hex 2716 from a defensive position with multiplier of three to one with a multiplier of two, thereby making it easier to clean out the hex and extend my supply lines just a bit further.

In the north things are quiet, except for 10th Motorized, which is sneaking around the Russian position in hex 3906 to aid Das Reich in annihilating the enemy.

The 12th and 3rd Panzer Divisions can get a 7:1 surrounded on hex 2421. This would allow the 29th Motorized Infantry to go to 2222 where it would have a 6-1 surrounded on 2323. All of this is generated because the 17th Panzer Division would be in supply after the Russian units in 2421 are eliminated. Some of the German infantry in 2113 should have gone to hex 2809 to help assault Rzhev. Notice how the Russian has crippled the German mobility. Given his catastrophic casualties, this is the only thing that gives the Russian a chance in this game.

The 4th Panzer Division should have taken the retreat, it only had one hex to which retreat was allowed. The 18th Motorized was left out on a limb. With the 8-10 capable of reaching hex 2917 and the Russian 9-8-6 capable of reaching 2919, it is very vulnerable to being attacked. The German should have placed the 29th Motorized Infantry in 2920 to prevent the surrounding of the 18th Motorized Infantry.

This turn finished late at night and fatigue is the only excuse for not taking Yel'nya.

#### Turn 10

**Russian:** The German player has apparently given up the attack in the north for the deeper penetration offered by the hole in my middle. I have given up Yel'nya because I do not have enough units to defend it successfully. I will beef up the defense of Roslav and only allow him to attack it on a limited front.

As for the penetration of the 10th Motorized Infantry in the north, I will have to pin it as soon as possible. I will use the 8-10 in hex 3409 to pin it (or use the Random Reinforcement if I roll a '2'). I can put six units around Yel'nya but this will weaken the areas from which I will have to take them. The 9-8-6 and the 3-7-6 will fall back as far as their three movement points will allow. This should put up a small screen that will delay him one movement phase. My 4-10 armor in the south (hex 1962) will move to Roslav, but if it were free to

move west and threaten to capture some of the cities it might draw the German infantry toward it. I will have to do something about the units around Vyazma. My lack of Headquarters units is still causing problems and tying up my units.

I will leave Gzhatsk open until my movement of Turn 11 and let the reinforcements from Entrance Hex X defend it. I attack the unit adjacent to Roslavl in hopes of reducing its attack strength so that it could not overrun me at 1:1 odds. This was the last unit in the south that could do so. I was able to reinforce Roslavl and use the 4-10 to keep it in supply. I must contain his movement again this turn with the use of my Interdiction marker, but I also must prepare for the turn when he is in full supply.

*It was a bad mistake not to attack the 18th Motorized Infantry. If one does not attack the 18th Motorized Infantry here, I guess the pin on the 10th Motorized Infantry is a fair second best. The 49th Headquarters is horribly misplaced; the units in 3708 can take care of themselves. The 49th Headquarters should have moved to 4001, with all three infantry in 4607 moving to 4303. This would make Rzhev very hard to take by Turn 12, and barring a total disaster (like two 0-0-6's in 3906) impossible to take on Turn 10.*

Vyazma is greatly over-defended. Four steps in Vyazma along with one U-6 in 3715, 3817, and 4118 would be plenty. This would free three units for hex 4303, and a unit each for 3724, 4321, and Yel'nya. The Russian does not have enough units to afford the luxury of over-defending any longer.

In the south, we see a very good attack against the 7th Panzer Division. With two 3-4-6s in Roslavl, the reduction of the only intact panzer division in the area will make it impossible to overrun Roslavl at 1:1 after it is reduced to two steps. The Russian would have been better advised, however, to reverse the positions of the 2-1-6 and the U-6. If the U-6 is a 0-0-6, Roslavl will have to take the combat result. The U-6 unit must be used in this combat to avoid being a step in Roslavl on a die roll of '6'.

**German:** This game turn is simplified in that the Russian has only sixteen stacks/units in the game and none of these are in any position to stop me from exploiting the Smolensk-Roslavl gap.

It is too bad that hex 2716 was so incredibly powerful in terms of its defensive strength. It means that all nine infantry divisions will not help with the attack on Vyazma. Therefore, I am going to use the 18th Panzer Division to attack the 31st Army HQ and two U-6 in hex 4107; if this is a trash stack (i.e., a 0-0-6, a 2-1-6 and the 31st Army HQ), I will crush it. From there the possibilities are almost endless. If the odds are bad and I get an A1 or A2 result, the unit will retreat, then reform during the Mechanized Phase and freeze the enemy units in hexes 4112, 4111, and any more reinforcements from hex X. The attack using 10th Motorized will allow me to either take Rzhev or use the division to pin other Russian units out of supply.

Why is the German so insistant on capturing 2716? The four infantry divisions in 2116 and 2115 should have been sent south. Roslavl is worth Victory Points and the infantry will not reach Vyazma before the end of the game. If Jody sends the two infantry in 2219 to 2222 and sends the 3rd Panzer Division to help on the attack 2323, the clearing of the Roslavl area could begin. The 29th Motorized Infantry and the 12th Panzer Division should trade places. A panzer division is much more powerful than a motorized one, especially when out of supply.

The attack on 2716 proves very painful for him—poetic justice perhaps. All of the involved units are lost in-so-far as Turn 11 is concerned and the infantry is out of the game for all practical purposes.

*It is easy to understand why the German did attack 4108, the odds were good that it would be a 1:1 attack and he desperately needs the free unit. It is difficult to understand why the Russian did not advance after combat. I can only conclude that he forgot that it was possible. The attack by the 10th Motorized Infantry was very critical, but it was an attack I would have made even though there was only a one-third chance of a favorable result. Although Rzhev has fallen, the German must maintain a line of communications to the west board edge. Easier said than done. This attack could have been postponed until the eleventh turn. If it were necessary it could have been taken then with the*

*same chances. If it had been an AE this turn, the Russian would have won the game.*

*It is certainly easy for your eyes to play tricks on you. I am sure two Germans "saw" the Russian stack in 4017 as being in 3981 but . . . whoops. The 18th Motorized Infantry should have driven to hex 2827. This would provide a viable threat to surrounding Roslavl on Turn 10. This would require the 12th Panzer Division to stay in the 3024 area where it would pose three threats to the Russians. It could cross the Desna and get on the Roslavl-5915 highway; it could attack Roslavl; or it could overrun the 4-10 unit if the 4-10 pinned the German infantry in 2520.*

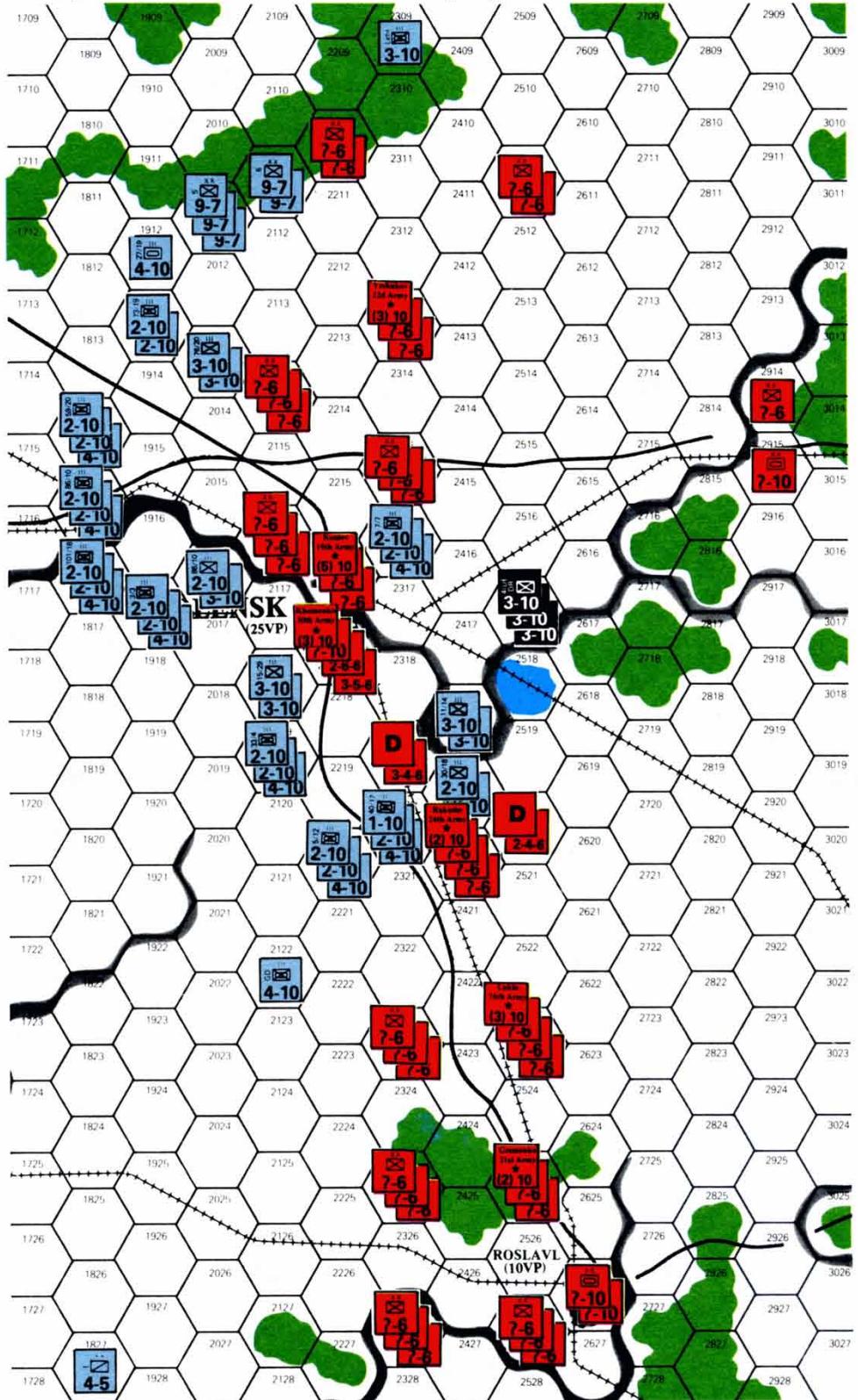


Illustration 4 The situation at the conclusion of the Soviet Combat Phase of Turn 7.

Meanwhile in the north the 18th Panzer Division pins itself, as having the Russian units in hex 4108 free is very dangerous. These are the units that best threaten the German line of communication with Rzhev, so that the 18th Panzer Division should pin these units. The 10th Motorized Infantry should have split. This is always a hard move to see but in this case it is clearly necessary. One of the units should take Rzhev while the other pins the 8-10 from 3802. The move would assure that Das Reich would be in supply on Turn 11. If Das Reich can free itself the line of communications to Rzhev is given.

## Turn 11

**Russian:** The stack in hex 2716 turned out to be very heroic and will hold down the eight attacking infantry divisions surrounding it. The German 29th Motorized Division has to be stopped, because it can reach Kaluga and hex 5915. I will have to pin him down, and create a screen with units that cannot reach it to pin this turn.

My attack on the 18th Panzer Division did not go as well as I had hoped; I needed that attack to get the extra five Victory Points. I move to cover Kaluga but I still need to cover hex 5915. The 9-8-6 is being used to force the German to actually enter Yel'nya, if he does not the 9-8-6 will occupy it. The 4-10 and U-6 unit will be used to keep the stack in Roslavl in supply by negating the German ZOC. The north is finally out of the game so I will quit worrying about it, and shift units elsewhere.

I like the thinking behind this move. The Russian has decided that he cannot hold Roslavl or stop the German from getting the Victory Points for Rzhev. I think he is wrong; but given his assumptions, the attack on the 18th Panzer Division is the only proper move. Eliminating the 18th Panzer Division is the sure way the Russian has of gaining the five Victory Points he needs to win—if his assumptions are true. But let's look at them.

In the south, if the Russian were to move both the 4-10 and the U-6 he has free to hex 2825, it becomes very difficult to attack Roslavl with enough units to have a 1:1 attack. The only two paths involve overruns. Either a combination of overrunning 2424 at 1:1 followed by a 3:1 overrun on 2625 or an unknown odds overrun on 2825. No guarantees to either side here. In the north, moving the 8-10 to pin Rzhev from 3902 with the 31st Headquarters moving to 3705 and the 4-3-6 moving in the stack at 3906 looks best. Again no guarantees for either side.

Railroading the units into Kaluga was a fine idea but 5915 is very vulnerable. Two of the reinforcements at 'X' along with the 32nd Headquarters should have moved to 5911 instead to reach 5915 on Turn 12. This would leave only two units in Gzhatsk but this is unavoidable.

In his attack, the Russian needed an average attack strength of four to have a 6:1. That was not very likely. A D2 instead of a D1 would have given the Russian a reasonable (40%) chance of killing the 18th Panzer Division on Turn 12 with a 1:1 overrun, followed by another 1:1 overrun and a 1:1 combat.

**German:** It looks as if 18th Panzer Division is in a small bit of trouble, but it is not worth rescuing at this time. It is necessary to occupy Yel'nya to prevent its re-occupation by Russian units.

Instead of going for Roslavl I will attempt to take hex 5915 for twenty points. I feel that this is in keeping with the spirit of the game in that this battle was just a way station on the road to Moscow. If nothing else it will prove amusing to take a hex on the eastern end of the map since I usually do not manage to capture hexes there. Safe victories are for the faint-hearted, bold decisive victories are for Real Men (or Real Women as the case calls for).

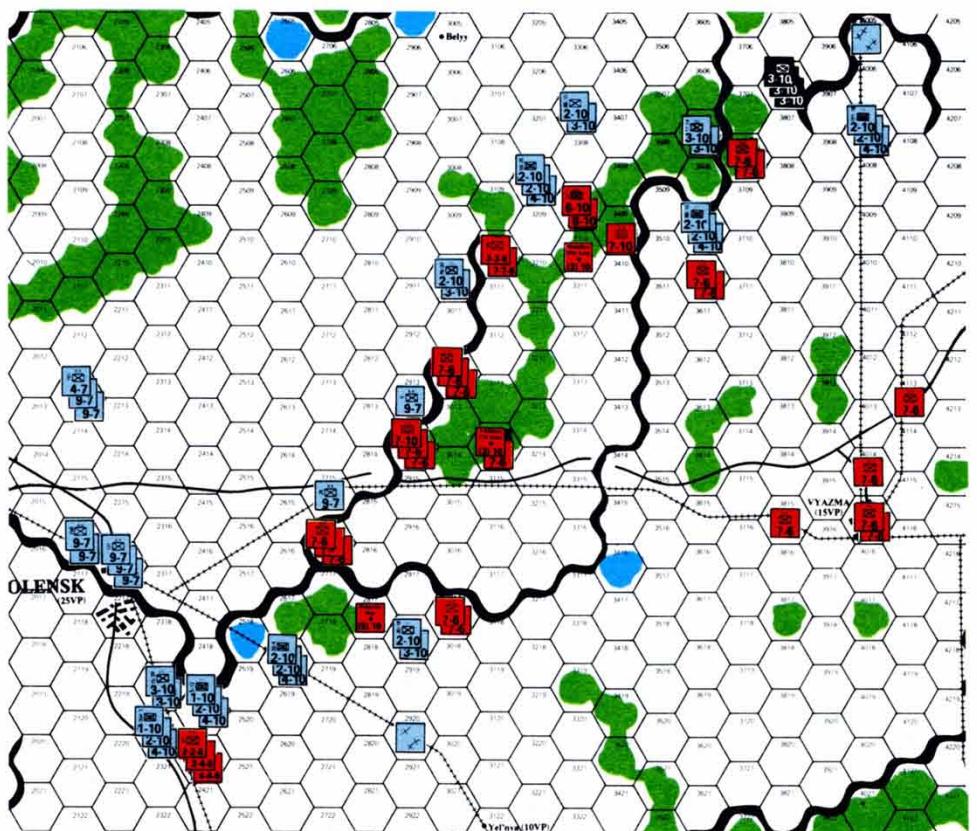


Illustration 5 The situation at the conclusion of the German Mechanized Movement Phase of Turn 8.

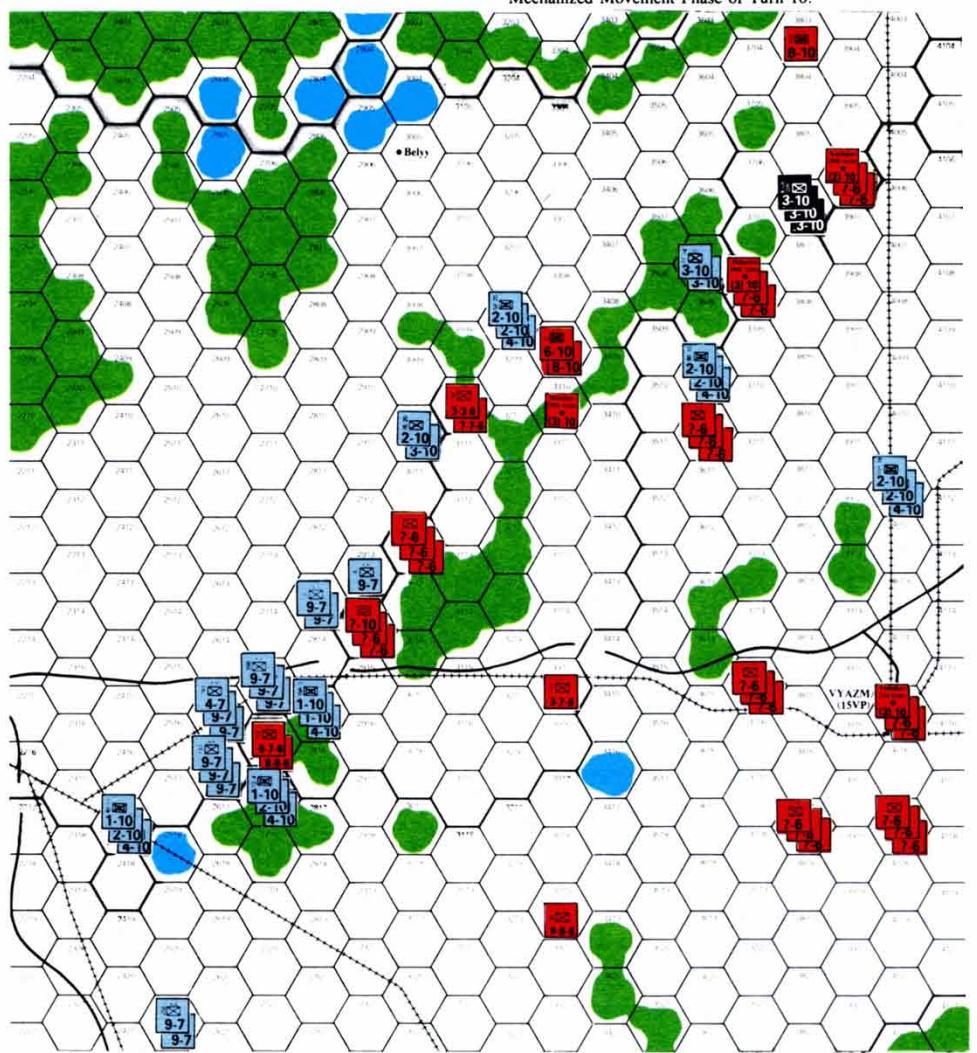


Illustration 6 The situation at the conclusion of the German Mechanized Movement Phase of Turn 10.

The 10th Motorized Infantry should have split. One unit could then remain in Rzhev while the other moves to pin Gzhatsk. If the German had done this and then pinned Vyazma with the 3rd Panzer Division, 5217 with the 29th Motorized Infantry and split the 12th Panzer Division using one unit each in 4714, 4716, and 4818, it would not be possible for the Russian to guard 5915. It was very careless of the German not to place a railroad cut in 1125. A random die roll of a "6" will probably cost the German the game, a chance easily avoidable by some careful planning.

The infantry in 2726 should have attacked the 4-10 in 2727. If this is successful, the attack on Roslavl is still a 1:1 assault as it is now out of supply. This also prevents the U-6 in 2827 from reaching Roslavl on Turn 12.

Even without the pin on Gzhatsk, the move I suggested in the initial paragraph still looks good. It is very hard to understand why the German leaves the Russian so many units free to move so late in the game.

## Turn 12

**Russian:** Oh well, here goes the game. I only have to stop a few mobile units, yet I now need to cover 5915 as well. I should have used the reinforcements from Entrance Hex X to move south and defend 5915. It also appears that the north is not quite out of the game, surprisingly.

A roll of "6" for my Random Reinforcement would have been very nice. I could have sent the unit north on the unbroken rail to block the forest-road hex and cut off German supply. It would be a cheap way to win but I would take any win now. I should not complain about rolling a "4", however. I took the SouthWestern reinforcements to block him from the last Victory Point hexes. It is all or nothing for him now. I have put Rzhev out of communication, and if he cannot open them up he will not get the Victory Points for it. My failure to eliminate the 18th Panzer Division hurts me because I have several units still pinned and I needed the five Victory Points. The pinned units being unable to move away cannot help defend 5915, the last obtainable German objective.

This has been a game of errors, but the unit in 5217 is the decisive error of the game if the German player sees it. Many good ideas on this turn. The overruns of the 18th Panzer Division risked nothing important and could have disrupted it, freeing many Russian units. The taking of the extra SouthWestern reinforcements was also very good. The best placement to guard all the victory hexes I could find was a 3-7-6 in 4816, U-6s in 4713, 4813, 5117, 5318, 5619, 5921, and 3613. Leaders in 5014 and 4514. This only leaves two U-6s in Vyazma, but this is unavoidable.

**German:** The game is won—simply eliminate that unit in hex 5217 with 29th Motorized Infantry and the 12th Panzer Division, then move one of those divisions into hex 5912. However, I am a very greedy person and will attempt to do not only that but also try to take Roslavl, Vyazma, and open a line of communication back to Rzhev. I do not expect all of this to happen, but it is fun trying.

The Roslavl attack fails. The Vyazma attack fails. The Rzhev attack works. The attack for hex 5915 also works. Oh well, fifty percent is not that bad.

He sees the weak spot. The rest of the turn is played only to see if Vyazma or Roslavl also falls.

## Post-Game

**Russian:** Well my congratulations go to the German. His attacks got him hex 5915 for the win. I am glad that Vyazma and Roslavl held until the end.

This was not one of my better games! That is a bit of an understatement, but then again I also did several things that I do not often get to do. First

### German Turn 5 Mechanized Movement Overruns

- 1) Attackers: 20th Panzer Division from 0518 (8 factors)  
0617 Defenders: 8-8-6 out of supply & surrounded (8 factors)  
Odds: 1 to 1 Die Roll: 1 Result: D1  
Russian eliminated.
- 2) Attackers: 29th Motorized Infantry from 2017 (6 factors)  
2118 Defenders: 4-3-6 (3 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 2 Result: D1  
Russian eliminated.
- 3) Attackers: 12th Panzer Division from 2320 (8 factors)  
2419 Defenders: 2-4-6 (4 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: A1  
German retreats to 2220.
- 4) Attackers: 17th Panzer Division from 2320 (8 factors)  
2419 Defenders: 2-4-6 (4 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 3 Result: D1/A1  
Russian retreats to 2520 and is disrupted.  
German 40/17 reduced to a 1-10.
- 5) Attackers: 4th Panzer Division from 2219 (8 factors)  
2319 Defenders: 3-4-6 (4 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: D1/A1  
Russian retreats to 2318 and is disrupted.  
German retreats to 2119.
- 6) Attackers: 19th Panzer Division from 2012 (8 factors)  
2112 Defenders: 2-4-6 (4 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 3 Result: D1/A1  
Russian retreats to 2212 and is disrupted.  
German retreats to 1912: 27/19; to 1913: 73/19, 74/19.

### German Turn 6 Initial Movement Overruns

- 1) Attackers: 5th, 35th, and 161st Infantry Divisions from 2112 (12 factors)  
2212 Defenders: 2-4-6 (4 factors)  
Odds: 3 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: Eng  
Russian eliminated.  
German 161st Infantry Division reduced to a 4-7.
- 2) Attackers: 12th Panzer Division from 2319 (8 factors)  
2318 Defenders: 3-4-6 out of supply & surrounded (2 factors)  
Odds: 4 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: D1  
Russian eliminated.

### German Turn 6 Combat

- 1) Attackers: Lehr, 6th and 26th Infantry Divisions (21 factors)  
2210 Defenders: 1-3-6, 5-5-6 out of supply (6 factors)  
Odds: 3 to 1 Die Roll: 2 Result: D2  
Russian eliminated.  
German 6th and 26th Infantry Divisions advance to 2210.
- 2) Attackers: 10th, 18th, and 19th Panzer Divisions, 20th Motorized Infantry (60 factors)  
2114 Defenders: 5-8-6, 2-4-6, 6-5-6 out of supply (8 factors)  
Odds: 7 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: D2/A1  
Russian 2-4-6 and 6-5-6 eliminated.  
German 76/20 reduced to a 2-10.
- 3) Attackers: 20th Panzer Division, Das Reich, 14th Motorized Infantry (46 factors)  
2315 Defenders: 2-5-6, 2-3-6, 2-4-6 out of supply (5 factors)  
Odds: 9 to 1 Die Roll: 2 Result: DE  
German 20th Panzer Division advances to 2315.
- 4) Attackers: 3rd, 4th, and 7th Panzer Divisions (48 factors)  
2315 Defenders: 3-4-6, 2-5-6, and 19th Headquarters out of supply (8 factors)  
Odds: 6 to 1 Die Roll: 2 Result: D2  
Russian 3-4-6 and 2-5-6 eliminated.

### German Turn 6 Mechanized Movement Overruns

- 1) Attackers: 20th Motorized Infantry from 2013 (5 factors)  
 2114 Defenders: 5-8-6 out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)
- Odds: 1 to 1                          Die Roll: 2                          Result: D1/A1
- Russian eliminated.  
 German retreats to 1914: 76/20; to 2012: 90/20.

### German Turn 7 Initial Movement Overruns

- 1) Attackers: 5th, 35th, and 161st Infantry Divisions from 2009 (10 factors)  
 2110 Defenders: 0-0-6 (eliminated)
- 2) Attackers: 18th Panzer Divisions from 3009 (8 factors)  
 3008 Defenders: 2-4-6 out of supply (4 factors)
- Odds: 2 to 1                          Die Roll: 1                          Result: D2
- Russian eliminated as no 2 hex retreat is possible.
- 3) Attackers: 18th Panzer Division from 3008 (8 factors)  
 3108 Defenders: 3-8-6 out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)
- Odds: 2 to 1                          Die Roll: 4                          Result: A1/D1
- Russian eliminated.  
 German retreats to 2909: 101/18, 52/18; to 2908: 18/18.

### German Turn 7 Combat

- 1) Attackers: Das Reich, 19th and 20th Panzer (50 factors)  
 3110 Defenders: 0-0-6, 3-3-6, 7-6-6 (18 factors)
- Odds: 2 to 1                          Die Roll: 6                          Result: A1
- German retreats to 2909: 27/19; to 2910: 73/19, 74/19, 21/20; to 2911: 59/20, 112/20; to 3008: 3/DR; to 3108: 2/DR, 4/DR
- 2) Attackers: 20th and 10th Motorized Infantry, 23rd, 263rd, and 137th Infantry Divisions (47 factors)  
 2116 Defenders: 1-5-6, 0-1-6, 3-4-6 out of supply (5 factors)
- Odds: 9 to 1                          Die Roll: 1                          Result: DE
- German advances 23rd, 263rd, and 137th Infantry Divisions to 2116.
- 3) Attackers: 7th Panzer Division (16 factors)  
 2216 Defenders: 19th Headquarters out of supply (4 factors)
- Odds: 4 to 1                          Die Roll: 4                          Result: D1
- Russian eliminated.
- 4) Attackers: 3rd, 4th, and 12th Panzer Divisions, 29th Motorized Infantry (60 factors)  
 2217 Defenders: 2-6-6, 3-5-6, 5-10, 30th Headquarters out of supply (14 factors)
- Odds: 4 to 1                          Die Roll: 2                          Result: D2
- Russian 5-10 and 30th Headquarters eliminated.
- 5) Attackers: 18th Motorized Infantry, 17th Panzer Division (-) (24 factors)  
 2420 Defenders: 1-1-6, 2-2-6, 4-4-6, 24th Headquarters (7 factors)
- Odds: 3 to 1                          Die Roll: 5                          Result: D1/A1
- Russian 1-1-6 eliminated.  
 German retreats to 2319: 18th Motorized Infantry; to 2219: 39/17, 63/17; to 2220: 40/17.

### German Turn 8 Overruns Initial Movement

- 1) Attackers: 17th Panzer Division from 1924 (7 factors)  
 1925 Defenders: 4-10 out of supply (2 factors)
- Odds: 3 to 1                          Die Roll: 4                          Result: D1/A1
- Russian retreats to 1926 and is disrupted.  
 German retreats to 1823: 39/17; to 1923: 40/17, 63/17.

### German Turn 8 Combat

- 1) Attackers: 3rd, 4th, and 12th Panzer Divisions, 29th Motorized Infantry, 23rd, 163rd, and 137th Infantry Divisions (Infantry out of supply) (72 factors)  
 2217 Defenders: 2-6-6, 3-5-6 out of supply (10 factors)
- Odds: 7 to 1                          Die Roll: 5                          Result: D2
- Russian eliminated.  
 German 29th Motorized Infantry advances to 2217 and takes Smolensk.

I'll look at my mistakes, then the things I believe I did right. A quick word of advice to any who play a game for a Series Replay: if you're going to take notes, go back and read them. The only time I read my notes in this game was just before Turn 4 and Turn 7 which were, in my opinion, my two best turns.

I made a lot of mistakes, including throwing the game away to the German several different times. First, I did not run my defense the correct way. I often left my leaders where they could be eliminated, and did not move them back to the next defensive line. I made stacks two units high and tried to defend with them. A stack of two can be eliminated by a D2, but a stack of three will still have one unit left after the dust settles.

I under-defended Smolensk and Roslavl, but over-defended Vyazma. The defense of Smolensk and Roslavl consists of a screen around the city, with a stack of four (three units and a leader) in each hex of the city. A line of supply must be kept open as long as possible. The best way to do this is to make both cities part of a north-south defense line. This way new units can be fed in as needed and the supply lines stay open as long as the defensive line holds. Vyazma, in this game, needed a stack of four also, but only a thin screen around it. This was because the German's mobility was severely limited by this point in the game.

One last point. The German is very mobile, and to counter this mobility the Russian must save his armor. I did not start doing this soon enough. The armor must be used to fill the defensive line *only* when there is no other way to do it. The armor should be used to pin deep penetration by the German, threaten German supply lines, and recapture cities.

Now to pat myself on the back. I did attack the German when he became over-extended. I did not follow through with my attacks, which was my mistake. In this case though, the attacks did more than just eliminate some of the German units; it lowered his mobility and forced him to regroup. The picking up of rail break markers is always a good idea. As you can see I did more wrong than right, and so I lost on the last turn.

**German:** I am happy to have won this game, even though I made many mistakes. I feel my biggest was not following the German principle of *Schwerpunkt*, or center of gravity (i.e., concentration of forces), during the initial movement phase and mechanized movement phase of Turn 8. Had I kept my mobile mechanized divisions together instead of using them in penny-packets as I did, I could have used them to free other mechanized divisions in the north. The Russian player could not have put any serious obstacles in the way of this plan. This mass of mechanized divisions may have been out of supply, but would have had sufficient attack points and movement points to carry out this maneuver. I could then have captured Vyazma from the north and isolated the rest of the Russian units.

Another mistake that I made was in not pinning most of the mobile Russian units near the end of the game by splitting some of my mobile units. This would have eliminated the need for rolling the attack to set up the taking of hex 5915. This could be an exception to my rule of not splitting mechanized divisions.

One of the many minor errors that I made in the beginning was to allow the build-up of defending units in hex 0617. This caused me to lose precious time because the units were able to delay me longer *en masse* then if they had not been stacked together. Another part of my problems also stemmed from my lack of aggressive use of the movement phases to overrun more Russian units, both to find their defensive value (the lesser of the two reasons), and to disrupt the actual unit, causing it to lose its Zone

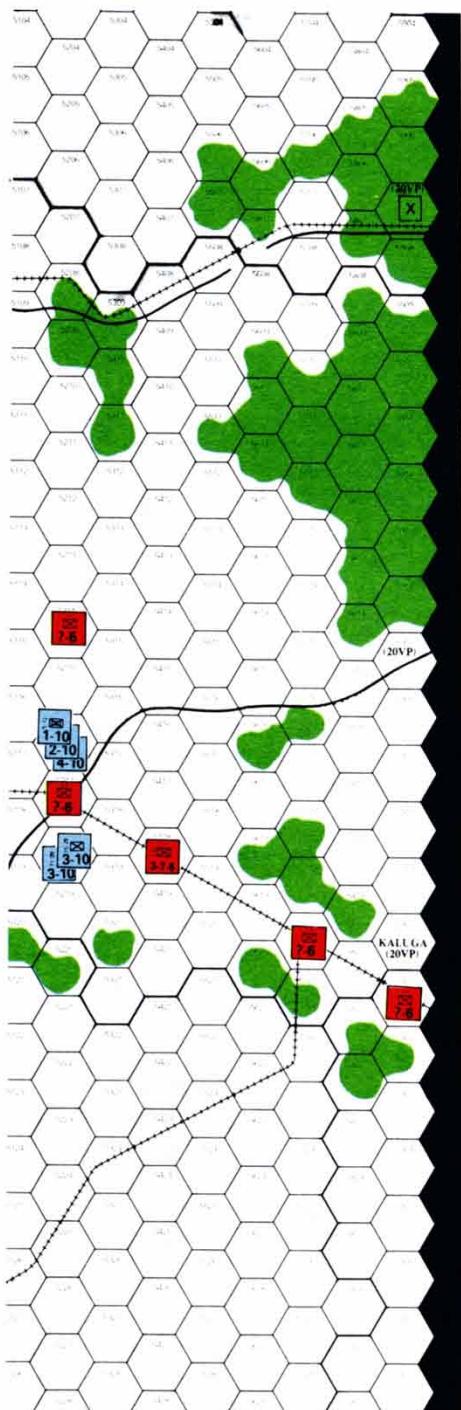
of Control and letting me exploit in the area around the unit where the Russian did not have a second line of defense.

With any post-game analysis, I could go into a detailed dissertation. But I feel that the pointing up of these, my most glaring errors, is enough to help any gamer avoid the error of these pitfalls.

An interesting game. Both players showed flashes of brilliance. Yet neither player could avoid major errors. The big Russian mistakes on Turn 5 and 6 were cancelled by the German failure to exploit properly and the major flaw of losing the mobility of half of the German Army in the north. For those interested in numbers: the average die roll for the German player was 3.4; for the Russian player, 4.25. The German player made 67 combat related rolls and the Russian made eight.



**Illustration 7** The situation at the conclusion of the German Movement Phase of Turn 12.



- 2) Attackers: 7th Panzer Division, 18th Motorized Infantry (26 factors)  
2420 Defenders: 2-2-6, 2-4-6, 4-4-6, 24th Headquarters (10 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: D1/A1  
Russian 24th Headquarters eliminated.  
German retreats to 2219: 7/7, 6/7; to 2220: 25/7, 30/18; to 2221: 51/18.

- 3) Attackers: 19th Panzer Division out of supply (8 factors)  
3409 Defenders: 8-10 (16 factors)  
Odds: 1 to 2 Die Roll: 6 Result: AE

#### German Turn 8 Mechanized Movement Overruns

- 1) Attackers: 29th Motorized Infantry from 2419 (6 factors)  
2420 Defenders: 2-2-6, 2-4-6, 4-4-6 out of supply (5 factors)  
Odds: 1 to 1 Die Roll: 5 Result: A1  
German retreats to 29th Motorized Infantry to 2319.

- 2) Attackers: 12th Panzer Division from 2419 (8 factors)  
2420 Defenders: 2-2-6, 2-4-6, 4-4-6 out of supply (5 factors)  
Odds: 1 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: Eng  
Russian 2-2-6 eliminated.  
German reduced 5/12 to a 1-10.

- 3) Attackers: 3rd Panzer Division from 2320 (8 factors)  
2420 Defenders: 2-4-6, 4-4-6 out of supply (4 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 3 Result: D1/A1  
Russian retreats to 2421 and is disrupted.  
German reduced 394/3 to a 1-10.

#### Russian Turn 9 Combat

- 1) Attackers: 3-7-6, 9-8-6 in 3017 (12 factors)  
2918 Defenders: 18th Motorized Infantry out of supply (4 factors)  
Odds: 3 to 1 Die Roll: 5 Result: D1/A1  
German reduced 51/18 to a 2-10.  
Russian retreats to 3016: 3-7-6; to 3118: 9-8-6.

#### German Turn 9 Combat

- 1) Attackers: 29th Motorized Infantry, 3rd and 12th Panzer Divisions (40 factors)  
2421 Defenders: 2-4-6, 4-4-6 out of supply (4 factors)  
Odds: 10 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: D2  
Russian eliminated.  
German advances 29th Motorized Infantry Division to 2421.
- 2) Attackers: 23rd, 263rd, 137th, 5th, 35th, and 161st Infantry Divisions, 4th Panzer Division (Infantry out of supply) (38 factors)  
2518 Defenders: 2-3-6, 4-5-6, 5-5-6 out of supply (5 factors)  
Odds: 7 to 1 Die Roll: 5 Result: D2  
Russian 2-3-6 and 4-5-6 eliminated.

#### German Turn 9 Mechanized Movement Overruns

- 1) Attackers: 4th Panzer Division from 2618 (8 factors)  
2518 Defenders: 5-5-6 out of supply & surrounded (2 factors)  
Odds: 4 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: D1  
Russian eliminated.
- 2) Attackers: 4th Panzer Division from 2717 (8 factors)  
2817 Defenders: Reserve Headquarters out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)  
Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: A1  
German reduced 12/4 to a 1-10.
- 3) Attackers: 3rd Panzer Division from 2718 (7 factors)  
2817 Defenders: Reserve Headquarters out of supply & surrounded (4 factors)  
Odds: 1 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: Eng  
Russian eliminated.  
German reduced 3/3 to a 1-10.

**German Turn 10 Combat**

- 1) Attackers: 31st and 34th Infantry Divisions (18 factors)  
 1125 Defenders: 5-5-6 out of supply (2 factors)  
 Odds: 9 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: D2  
 Russian eliminated.  
 German advances 31st and 34th Infantry Divisions to 1225
- 2) Attackers: 18 Motorized Infantry, 12th Panzer Division, (both out of supply) (12 factors)  
 3018 Defenders: 0-0-6 (eliminated)  
 German advances 18th Motorized Infantry (-) to 3019.
- 3) Attackers: 4th and 3rd Panzer Divisions, 26th, 17th, 268th, 5th, 35th, 161st, 23rd, 263rd, 137th (Infantry out of supply) (60 factors)  
 2716 Defenders: 5-4-6, 6-7-6, 8-8-6 (18 factors)  
 Odds: 3 to 1 Die Roll: 3 Result: D1  
 Russian 5-4-6 eliminated.
- 4) Attackers: 18th Panzer Division out of supply (8 factors)  
 4108 Defenders: 0-0-6, 4-3-6, 31st Headquarters (3 factors)  
 Odds: 2 to 1 Die Roll: 6 Result: A1  
 German retreats 18th Panzer Division to 3908.
- 5) Attackers: 10th Motorized Infantry out of supply (4 factors)  
 3904 Defenders: 8-10 (8 factors)  
 Odds: 1 to 2 Die Roll: 1 Result: D1/A1  
 Russian retreats to 3803.  
 German reduced 69/10 to a 2-10.

**Russian Turn 11 Combat**

- 1) Attackers: 3911: 0-0-6, 1-3-6, 6-8-6, 31st Headquarters; 3912: 2-4-6, 3-4-6; 4111: 4-3-6, 3-4-6; 4112: 3-4-6, 3-3-6, 6-6-6, 32nd Headquarters (38 factors)  
 4011 Defenders: 18th Panzer Division out of supply (8 factors)  
 Odds: 4 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: D1  
 German reduced 101/18.

**German Turn 11 Initial Movement Overruns**

- 1) Attackers: 29th Motorized Infantry from 4521 (6 factors)  
 4520 Defenders: 0-0-6 (eliminated)

**German Turn 11 Combat**

- 1) Attackers: 258th and 292nd Infantry Divisions, 7th Panzer Division (32 factors)  
 2626 Defenders: 2-1-6, 3-4-6, 3-4-6, 16th Headquarters (18 factors)  
 Odds: 1 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: Eng  
 Russian 2-1-6 eliminated.  
 German reduced 6/7 to a 1-10.
- 2) Attackers: 4th and 3rd Panzer Divisions, 26th, 17th, 268th, 5th, 35th, 161st, 23rd, 263rd, and 137th Infantry Divisions (102 factors)  
 2716 Defenders: 8-8-6, 6-7-6 out of supply (14 factors)  
 Odds: 7 to 1 Die Roll: 4 Result: D2  
 Russian eliminated.  
 German advances 137th, 263rd, and 23rd Infantry Divisions to 2816.

**Russian Turn 12 Overruns**

- 1) Attackers: 1-3-6, 6-8-6, 31st Headquarters from 3911 (5 factors)  
 4011 Defenders: 18th Panzer Division out of supply (7 factors)  
 Odds: 1 to 2 Die Roll: 3 Result: A1  
 Russian 1-3-6 eliminated.
- 2) Attackers: 3-3-6, 3-4-6, 6-6-6, 32nd Headquarters from 4112 (6 factors)  
 4011 Defenders: 18th Panzer Division out of supply (7 factors)  
 Odds: 1 to 2 Die Roll: 4 Result: A1  
 Russian 3-3-6 eliminated.

**AREA TOP 50 LIST**

Rank	Name	Times On List	Rating	Previous Rank
1.	K. Combs	41	2598YOV	1
2.	B. Dobson	16	2368RJR	2
3.	D. Burdick	40	2188GGN	4
4.	P. Siragusa	35	2157EHJ	3
5.	B. Sinigaglio	26	2150GHI	5
6.	W. Scott	38	2082KIU	6
7.	J. Beard	30	2071HIP	8
8.	F. Preissle	38	2069LNX	7
9.	H. Newby	6	2066MHM	9
10.	D. Garbutt	39	2055GIN	12
11.	E. Mineman	11	2045CEE	11
12.	J. Kreuz	35	2041GGL	10
13.	D. Barker	6	2044GHN	13
14.	P. Landry	15	2012HHM	14
15.	S. Sutton	8	1997EGL	19
16.	B. Remsburg	24	1996GIP	16
17.	M. Sincavage	30	1993EEJ	17
18.	P. Gartman	6	1975HGI	18
19.	F. Freeman	15	1964EFG	20
20.	D. Munsell	36	1958HHM	21
21.	P. Flory	17	1920DGI	22
22.	G. Charbonneau	4	1915HGI	23
23.	R. Leach	43	1906ILS	24
24.	F. Reese	21	1898HDF	25
25.	L. Kelly	34	1889WWZ	26
26.	M. Simonitch	11	1874DEH	27
27.	R. Beyma	16	1871CDF	28
28.	B. Schoose	6	1856GHP	29
29.	M. Rogers	1	1855CEH	—
30.	C. Wannall	17	1852HLP	30
31.	F. Ornstein	24	1843FHN	31
32.	N. Cromartie	26	1838GHO	32
33.	T. Oleson	50	1834XYZ	15
34.	R. Berger	2	1833CDE	33
35.	J. Sunde	16	1830KKK	34
36.	B. Downing	30	1830FHL	35
37.	J. Baker	13	1829CEI	36
38.	P. DeVolpi	7	1828DED	37
39.	D. Greenwood	41	1821GFJ	46
40.	W. Ownbey	10	1812CEI	38
41.	J. Anderson	17	1809DDF	39
42.	R. Phelps	22	1806HJQ	40
43.	B. Sutton	9	1806DFE	41
44.	P. Ford	6	1797GCP	42
45.	M. Miller	27	1795GHO	43
46.	R. Shurdut	7	1785DDJ	44
47.	M. Frisk	1	1783CDH	—
48.	B. Salvatore	9	1782FJN	45
49.	K. McCarthy	6	1770CEH	47
50.	J. White	8	1769DFK	48

**MEET THE 50 . . .**

Mr. James Baker is 34, single, holds a MS in computer science and is employed by the US State Department in Washington, DC.

**Favorite Game:** THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

**AREA Rated Games:** TRC, AK

**AREA W-L Record:** 13-2

**Gaming Time/Week:** 15 hrs.

**Hobbies:** Music, Chess

**Pet Peeve:** PBM opponents who disappear when losing.

**% Time PBM:** 10%

**Play Preference:** Either

Mr. Baker states:

"I enjoy PBM because one can really subject the game to analysis and play tends to be of the highest quality. AREA has been extremely helpful in this because it ensures that the opponents will be 'sportsmen'. This does not mean that one should limit himself solely to PBM. But for many, it is the best. For FTF, I prefer the visual appeal of miniatures and the joy of unique tactical situations."

# HOW TO WIN AT PANZERBLITZ

## The Serious Side of Choosing Sides

By Steve Powlesland

**PANZERBLITZ** is certainly one of the most challenging games created by the wizards of the Avalon Hill Game Company, and by far the most educational. For those new to the hobby, there is no finer tactical simulation anywhere. By presenting us with such an array of stimulating situations, we cannot help but absorb key tactical methods, culminating in the primary lesson: how to win. Even for the veterans, it can be enlightening to examine the game situation by situation, however, imagining every step of the way that this is all somehow new—as though we were novices once again. Studying the rules carefully with a friend, and noting that we are recommended to begin with the lower number game situations, we commence with . . .

**SITUATION I:** The first situation is also the vehicle for presenting an essential principle of this war on the Eastern Front. That is, *this* happens to be occurring in 1944 and not 1914. The Russians, not having discovered this themselves, send in honest-to-God cavalry, supported by some non-descript artillery and a few tanks, to take an entrenched hilltop position guarded by 88mm cannon and some very effective flak guns. Secure in the town and in the nearby woods, the Germans confidently wait for the Light Brigade maneuver of Crimean War fame; or else they pick off daring tanks with the aplomb found in a shooting gallery. Despite this, we are pleased to see that at least someone is bound to win, given the victory conditions. *Never* mind that it is almost always the Germans. Armed with this illusion of better things to come, we are now ready for . . .

**SITUATION II:** In August of 1914, France and Britain were convinced that much of their salvation lay in the appearance of the vaunted Russian "steamroller". Unfortunately, the steamroller did not appear and so they found it necessary to do their fighting themselves. Actually, it was not that the steamroller never existed—it was just late. About thirty years late. For now, as the German commander, we see that it is no fantasy. With our "small German mobile force", we face the difficulty of trying to stop a march that seems to ooze rather than penetrate as those sneaky Russian SOBs think nothing of hiding behind trees and creeping along slopes just to get a few more miles west. Meanwhile, a bunch of Russian trucks hauling 120mm mortars or 122mm howitzers have sped off into the distance, and are now parking themselves somewhere just across the Oder, thereby ensuring the Russian of a decisive victory. You must decide whether to come to the rescue of the Fuehrer, or attempt to destroy the ten or twenty Russian units necessary for victory (but quick decision under fire is the hallmark of a successful commander, even when he loses). Dispensing with WWI finally, we can proceed to . . .

**SITUATION III:** You know the saying "pride goes before a fall", and you have heard the Biblical story of Job. Perhaps you are aware of the Greek term *hubris*. If not, you soon will be. It is 1941, early in the war against Russia. You are a tank commander of the 10th Panzer Division, part of the all-conquering German *blitzkrieg*. Moreover, you read that "Advancing German mobile units scatter remnants of shattered Russian units during the push on Moscow". This means you, and there are stars in your eyes, as you see yourself being congratulated by the Fuehrer himself as the first to sight the towers

of the Kremlin. While the rest of the division has stopped along the side of the road to have breakfast, you forge ahead to glory. And why not, for all that stands between you and Stalin are the "remnants of the 119th Rifle Division".

Now what Avalon Hill means by "remnants", however, is that this division lost its commanding officer and the political commissar in an early example of a fraggling incident—to your disadvantage. And so you are "topping the rise . . . a glint of dawn reflecting off the muzzle of the first German tank" and you see in front the Russian version of the Siegfried Line, with 76.2mm artillery staked out in the woods above and a monstrous line of infantry dug in along the side of the plateau. A mass of insolent barbarian Guards are sitting square across the only valley passage. Five years ago, your tanks saw suicidal action in Spain; but they are all you have now, and so you futilely concentrate them for the great drive—supporting their prospective advance with the artillery you had planned to use to blow a hole through the city gates of Moscow. The Russians are reputed to move with the consistency of molasses, but they fill holes created in their lines as though they had the consistency of water. Unsuccessful in even making a dent you decide to go back and have the breakfast you missed, and let someone else take Moscow. While eating, you can contemplate the problem presented by . . .

**SITUATION IV:** Back to 1944 (a bad year for situation cards). We see we must acquaint ourselves with a tactic which is "more economical (and often more effective) than a blocking action". We also get to experience another important principle: you can't fight with what you don't have. Reminiscent of the battles of Lexington and Concord, the German battle group (composed of elements from two

regiments and three battalions—which means these are the survivors) proceeds to squeeze itself into forests, hide behind rocks and buildings, run around mountains, and jump from one place to another preparing ambushes for the Russian tank corps . . . who, unfortunately, persist in using the same tactics. Pretty soon the Germans run out of trees, rocks, buildings, mountains . . . and troops. Resolved to take the initiative, they find themselves next in . . .

**SITUATION V:** In this situation, the Russian victory conditions say they "Win if they can prevent the Germans from accomplishing their victory conditions". This is a little like saying they win if the sun rises in the East tomorrow morning. Actually the Germans have the opportunity here to duplicate one of history's most amazing military adventures: Hannibal's crossing of the Alps. But in this case all the German elephants are white, and instead of facing a few irate Gallic tribesmen, you are wending your way through a thicket of 122mm howitzers, 120mm mortars, and 45mm anti-tank guns, not to mention mines, tank-destroyers, and fanatical Russian infantry. Your goal is to attack the Dnieper bridge with seven units or more (these will probably consist mostly of trucks) and return to your own lines before you run out of ammunition, fuel, time. But, if you reach the bridge, you may as well keep going right on over to the nearest prison camp, because there is absolutely no chance of getting back in time.

By the time you have gone through all twelve situations, you should be in a position to provide the correct answer to the question we broached at the beginning of this treatise: how to win. You must utilize superb tactics, blinding speed, total surprise, and brutal tenacity—when the time comes to choose sides. On this matter there can be no second place.



#### Russian Turn 12 Combat

- 1) Attackers: 6-8-6, 2-4-6, 3-4-6, 3-5-6, 4-3-6, 3-4-6, 3-4-6, 6-6-6, 31st Headquarters, 32nd Headquarters (34 factors)  
4011 Defenders: 18th Panzer Division out of supply (7 factors)  
Odds: 4 to 1                          Die Roll: 6                          Result: Eng  
German reduced 52/18 to a 1-10.  
Russian 2-4-6 eliminated.

#### **German Turn 12 Initial Movement Overruns**

- 1) Attackers: 258th and 292nd Infantry Divisions from 2726 (8 factors)  
2727 Defenders: 4-10 (8 factors)

Odds: 1 to 1                          Die Roll: 3                          Result: D1/A1

Russian eliminated.  
German 258th Infantry Division reduced to a 4-7.



### **German Turn 12 Combat**

# VICHY IN THE EAST

## A British Strategy in the Levant

By William Searight

Syria was one of the overseas territories of France which, on the collapse of the metropolitan government, considered itself bound by the surrender and resisted the British advance into the Levant in early June 1941. By the middle of July '41, the Vichy authorities there sued for peace and Syria passed into Allied occupation. Although the time frame was comparatively short, the fighting was bitter and caused Great Britain to dispatch additional reinforcements to the area when she could least afford them from other theaters. But, so the argument goes, they had to be sent to prevent an Axis incursion in the Middle East.

In *THIRD REICH*, history is altered somewhat in regard to the status of France's colonies. If Lebanon-Syria becomes Vichy, then the British player is beset with the same strategic and tactical problems of history. The British player has only a limited amount of manpower with which to defend his empire. But something can be done to alleviate the potential problem of having a Vichy Levant—a new strategy.

### Lebanon-Syria

As the Allied and Axis forces are locked in intensive combat on the European continent, the distant French colony of Lebanon-Syria seems of little immediate importance to either player. Generally garrisoned by a single French infantry, this area does not come into strategic focus until France is conquered. At this time, the French player must wait in anticipation while the German player rolls the die to determine the status of French colonies.

As a British player, I am certainly not one to relish the idea of having my Egyptian defenses rest on a 50-50 chance of the die result on having a Vichy colony in the Middle East, as this would require stationing additional British forces in Palestine and Transjordan to protect the eastern approaches to the Canal. With Britain's meager forces already stretched to the limit, this additional burden could leave other sectors dangerously weakened. Britain really has very little choice except to react in some way. To ignore the threat would only allow the Axis to quickly spearhead attacks against Egypt from two directions and overrun the Suez Canal.

Of course the British have *Rule 35.5* to help alleviate such a problem (i.e., two British fleets based east of the Suez Canal and/or a combination of air factors within four hexes of the Axis ports would negate the 18 maximum factors allowed to be brought in by the Axis). But the Axis can counter this rule, to an extent, by bringing in fleet/air factors of their own. A 5-4 air unit in Rhodes, along with an Italian fleet SRed into Beirut, would offset the 18 British fleet factors and allow the Axis to SR in nine factors of ground units. NOTE: Although the fleet in Beirut is counted as part of the 18 factors allowed, the air unit in Rhodes is not.

For the British to counter this Axis play, he would have to increase his commitment of fleets and air factors—east of the Suez Canal. The above situation could continue to escalate further by the Axis control of Cyprus and/or Crete (for basing additional air). Eventually, the British player could very well find himself with an inordinate amount of his naval and air forces tied down in Egypt, leaving England and other sectors dangerously exposed. Instead of this huge drain on the British resources, there is a much easier, more efficient, and less costly method of keeping the Axis out of the Levant.

### In Defense of Lebanon-Syria

If someone were to tell you that it would be possible for the British to hold and defend Lebanon-Syria with only an airbase counter and a 1-3 infantry unit (without naval or air support), against the entire Italian Navy loaded to the gunwales with armor and infantry, you would probably consider the idea laughable at best. Conversely, it will be shown how this seemingly impossible idea can become reality, but first some points that may come to mind.

The Vichy status of a colony is determined at the end of the Allied combat phase, when Paris cannot be recaptured. Since British units must be SRed out of Vichy territory, how can the Axis be prevented from SRing forces into Lebanon-Syria? And even if the British were able to capture and defend this Vichy colony, how could a single weak infantry unit hope to hold off a seaborne invasion force (i.e., two 3-3 Italian units aboard two fleets, supported by shore bombardment from three fleets).

In countering the above, Britain needs only to build/SR an airbase counter into Beirut anytime before the German occupation of Paris. As far as defending the beach hex, there is no need to, nor will a single British fleet be required to sortie out to intercept any Italian naval mission. How? Rule 49.6 pertains to British units (ground, air, and fleets), which must be SRed out of Vichy territory, but an airbase is only a counter and not a unit (see 4.4). Therefore the airbase counter could remain in Beirut, adjacent to the now Vichy French infantry unit on the beach. As the airbase counter sits on the only logistic source for this Vichy colony (27.12), the Vichy infantry unit could neither be moved nor SRed away from the beach hex (27.42), nor on the following Axis turn could additional Axis units be sea transported or sea escorted to this colony. By the end of the Axis turn, the Vichy infantry, cut-off from supply, would be eliminated through isolation. Of course, for the airbase counter to remain in Beirut, Britain would have to declare war on Vichy France on the very next turn (49.6). To fulfill this requirement the British Palestinian 1-3 garrison could be moved north from its beachhead to Beirut. NOTE: In reaching Beirut, no other Vichy hexes are to be crossed over or occupied other than those necessary to complete the above action, and during the SR phase, an additional unit would have to be brought in to cover Palestine's beach hex.

### Axis Seaborne Invasion

The Axis player(s) would certainly classify this defense as no defense at all, believing the situation could easily be rectified by launching a massive invasion. Since the beach hex is now empty (the French unit previously eliminated through isolation), an attacking force could land unopposed, smash the puny British 1-3 unit, capture the port, and then SR in additional ground/air units. Sounds simple and straightforward, but in reality, the Axis would be stopped cold on the beach, no matter what force is thrown ashore.

The key to the British defense lies not in the match of combat forces, but rather by something more subtle—that of logistics. The Axis could certainly invade the beach, but because the British never occupied nor moved over it, the beach hex would still be considered friendly to the Axis (meaning that no Axis bridgehead counter could be used—9.11, 29.436). The original Axis units landed on the un-

defended beach hex could not conduct attacks against any enemy adjacent to the target hex (29.436). With no bridgehead counter, the remaining embarked Axis units (which did not participate in the attack), could not land, even if they were armor expecting to exploit out of the beach since the beach hex was already Vichy (friendly) and no breakthrough hex could be established (14.31). With no bridgehead or breakthrough hex possible, armor could not be exploited nor supplied from the beach hex in order to attack the British unit (14.4, including ERRATA).

Even if the Axis *had* been in a position to take advantage of and conduct a seaborne invasion on the Axis turn immediately after the fall of France, the British airbase counter would be sufficient to deter the Axis for the same reasons. In a nutshell, the maximum number of Axis units on the beach hex, at any one time, would be limited to two, and even these would be out of supply at the beginning of their next turn. Without logistical support, the seaborne invasion forces fate is sealed even before leaving port. At most, they will control a few bits of sand and rock at the water's edge until their supplies are exhausted and then be eliminated (17.1, 27.43).

As the war continues, the Axis might attempt other alternate methods to gain control of Beirut (i.e., invade Cyprus and bring in air/parachute forces), but any such action should alert the British player sufficiently ahead of time to plan counter strategy—increasing Beirut's ground defense and/or having air available for counterair and DAS. To help deter Axis control of Cyprus, a British pre-emptive move could be to SR an infantry unit to Cyprus (29.67). This can be done by first pre-staging a fleet to Malta and then SRing Malta's 1-3 garrison to Cyprus on the following turn. The above should be accomplished before the fall of France since Italian fleets rarely attempt seaborne invasions while both the French and British naval forces are active in the Mediterranean. After France has fallen, more British units will be available for use in the Mediterranean and the Cyprus garrison could be replaced with a stronger infantry unit.

### Summary

The British player must prevent the Axis from getting a foothold in the Levant, even with a small force. Not only would Egypt be threatened, but perhaps Turkey, the Lend Lease Route, and southern Russia (if Turkey were to fall). Although the Axis are limited to 18 factors through ports (east of the Suez Canal), the British player could still be forced to tie down valuable air and fleet factors in Egypt/Palestine just to prevent an Axis buildup that may or may not happen. This threat would force Britain to deploy additional ground units to Palestine and Transjordan to prevent even a few Axis units from reaching the Suez. Britain's initial combat ground and air, plus allowable builds (before 1942), does not match Germany's at-start ground and air strengths. While Germany and Italy have a massive amount of future manpower to mobilize (total numbers of units), Britain has comparatively few in number and these must be carefully deployed to protect not only England's shores, but her far flung outposts and colonies as well. Britain is stretched very thin defensively until America enters the war. That is why this British strategy towards a potential Vichy Lebanon-Syria is important, since it conserves

British resources. Although some critics may deplore the concept of an early declaration of war on Vichy France (this does not automatically cause activation), without planning to gain any conquest BRPs for Lebanon-Syria, I for one feel that the strategic value of this area, far outweighs any of these minor disadvantages.

Once the British have control of Beirut, eliminated the French through isolation, and moved the infantry into Beirut, the airbase counter and the 1-3 infantry unit can be redeployed back to Palestine and/or Egypt. A garrison within the Levant would no longer be necessary except in the event of an Axis parachute threat. Although it may sound strange, a Vichy Lebanon-Syria would be more of a strategic value to Britain than having a Free French colony.

Without having to deploy additional fleets, air and ground units to the Levant, these same units are free for future operations such as creating an impregnable Malta defense (thereby strangling the Axis supply to North Africa), sea escorting more units per turn throughout the British Empire, and later sending vitally needed BRP loans to Russia. These are but a few ideas that show what far-reaching effects a minimum of force can have if applied at the right place and at the exact optimum moment.



### **SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING**

**Titles Listed: 124**

Total Responses: 513

Rank:	Title	Pub	Rank Times		
			Last	On	Freq.
			Time	List	Ratio
1.	Up Front	AH	1	5	9.3
2.	Squad Leader	AH	4	23	3.8
3.	Third Reich	AH	5	23	3.1
4.	B-17	AH	2	6	3.0
5.	Bulge '81	AH	19	3	2.3
6.	Russian Campaign	AH	7	23	2.1
7.	Cross of Iron	AH	10	23	2.0
8.	WS&IM	AH	12	8	2.0
9.	Ambush	VG	9	2	1.9
10.	War & Peace	AH	—	1	1.7
11.	Empires in Arms	ADG	—	1	1.6
12.	Banzai	AH	—	1	1.5
13.	Air Force	AH	13	3	1.4
14.	Civilization	AH	6	4	1.3
15.	G.I.	AH	3	13	1.3
16.	Naval War	AH	—	1	1.2
17.	Crescendo of Doom	AH	11	2	1.1
18.	Nato	VG	—	1	1.1
19.	Hitler's War	AH	—	1	1.0
20.	Hundred Days	AH	—	1	1.0

A number of interesting fluctuations appear in this issue's listings of the popular played games among our readers. *UP FRONT* continues to dominate the listing as no game has for some time. Riding this tide of popularity is *BANZAI*, its expansion gamette, which appears for the first time. *HITLER'S WAR*, subject of our next issue, makes its first showing while, ironically, *PG GUDERIAN* falls from the list. *NATO* and *Empires in Arms*, both fine games, return to the list after a brief hiatus. Obviously sparked by recent contests, *HUNDRED DAYS BATTLES* and *NAVAL WAR* also make an unusually strong showing. Meanwhile, a number of games—*STORM OVER ARNHEM*, *FLAT-TOP*, *VITP* and *GUNS OF AUGUST*—all fall just below the mark. Bob McNamara's revision of *PANZERBLITZ* (due out in 1985), which seems to be showing its age, should return that game to its rightful place among these titles.

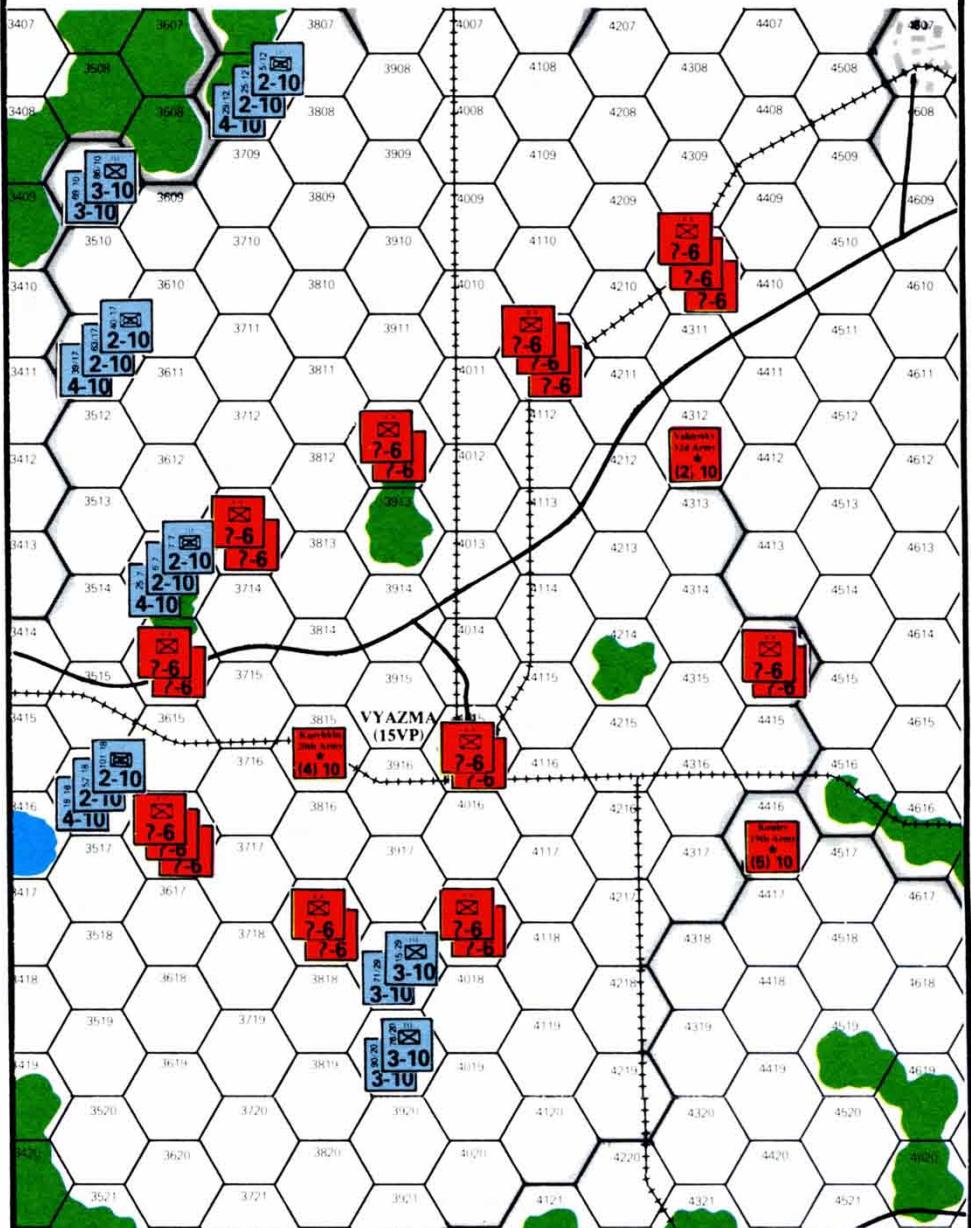
## **CONTEST #122**

The straightforward object of Contest 122 is the German capture of Vyazma as quickly as possible in one turn of a game of *PANZERGRUPPE GUDELIAN*. The contest commences with the beginning of the current German Player Turn. All German units are at full strength; the Soviet interdiction marker is not in play; and the road from 3414 to 0120 is considered clear. Only the units shown are available, and only the area of the map depicted may be moved over. Note that all German divisions have their components stacked together. For the purpose of this contest, all Russian units are considered to have an exactly *average* defensive strength and all German die rolls are considered to be 2!

The task of the reader is simple: move the German units and conduct their overruns and attacks in the most efficient manner possible to insure the fall of the city during the current turn. Capturing Vyazma during the Movement Phase is rated better than capturing it during the Combat Phase; capturing it during either is better than capturing it in the Mechanized Movement Phase. Finally, in the case of ties, those who accomplish the task with the *least* number of die rolls win. To complete the contest, indicate: 1) the phase in which Vyazma falls; 2) the number of die rolls required for your solution; 3) indicate movement of units and any overruns and/or attacks they make. All standard rules of *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* apply.

The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a facsimile) found on the insert of this issue. Ten winning entries will receive merchandise credits from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must be received prior to the mailing of the next issue and include a numerical rating for this issue as a whole, as well as listing the three best issues. The solution to Contest 122 will appear in Vol. 21, No. 5 and the list of winners in Vol. 21, No. 6 of *The GENERAL*.

For those who may wish to recreate the contest with their game, the following units are placed as indicated:



# TURNING THE TIDE

## Playing the Russian in The RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

By Michael Anchors



Since publication in 1976, *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* has been a stable resident of the "So That's What You've Been Playing" top ten, but relatively few articles have dealt with the game. Those that have appeared have dealt almost exclusively with the initial set-up and first turn of the Campaign Game. The middle game and end game have been neglected. Indeed, in the only Series Replay (Vol. 16, No. 4) to date, the Russians were crushed in 1942. Most games I have observed have ended in two hours or ten turns because there was not time to finish. The rules provide for shorter scenarios. Players could start the game in mid-1942 to get a taste of the middle game, but most don't because they "don't want to be handicapped by the mistakes of their predecessors". As a result, few players practice the subtle art of turning the tide and using the Red Army on the offense. A real shame.

The first major Soviet offensive should roll off in November 1942. The Russians may strike at vulnerable Axis units even before then, being careful to avoid severe casualties or jeopardize precious terrain. But the first pre-meditated, sustained offensive must await the cold of November. If the offensive starts late, say in January, there won't be time to cause appreciable destruction of Axis forces before March brings non-snow weather, the Axis replacements and a Stuka. If the offensive starts early, in September, there is a 50% chance the Germans will have non-snow weather in November in which to mount a response aimed at minimizing their loss. In clear weather, a 17% chance, two Stukas are on hand to pulverize the Soviet spearheads. Mud, a 33% chance, slows the Soviet drive while the Axis uses full rail capacity to reinforce.

The crux of the problem lies in the fact that the Russians cannot afford to miss damaging the Wehrmacht, but cannot afford to lose many armor and Guard units either. Those mobile units are needed behind the front in 1943 to blunt Axis thrusts. Armor and Guard units are replaced slowly, one each per turn. Be sure to include a low-factor unit, preferably infantry, in any attack in which the CRT may call for a unit loss.

Snow is ideal weather for Russians. The dreaded Stukas disappear, allowing armor and Guards to stack together safely. Axis rail capacity is cut to three; Russian capacity stays at five. First impulse movement is cut in half for both sides, and second impulse movement is one hex for most units. Thus the Germans are deprived of their usual advantage in mobility. True, Russian non-Guard infantry units can't move in the second impulse, but most infantry on the offensive front should be Guards. Let the mukluks hold down the rear and non-active parts of the line.

In snow, Axis units not adjacent to Axis-controlled cities have their combat factor cut in half (17.2). Technically, units two hexes away from a city are not halved unless the intervening hex is in a Russian ZOC, but in most situations the intervening hex is in a ZOC. The ZOC can even belong to one of the units attacking the now out-of-supply Axis unit. If a separate Russian unit is needed to put the intervening hex in a ZOC, the Russian player should

resolve combat against the out-of-supply unit first. This rule deserves careful attention by every Russian player.

Russian airborne units can do their thing only in snow months (18). There are just three of these beauties and each can jump but once, so thrift is in order. They are most handy in 1944 to complete encirclements the Germans are too weak or too harried to break. The airborne can cut railroads in areas partisans can't reach because of SS units; but then, the SS is represented by a single unit in 1942 so the partisans can handle the job. In fact, there is little use for the airborne at all in 1942, but they are available in a pinch.

Winter should see the Wehrmacht sapped by accumulated losses. Replacements don't arrive until the first clear weather in 1943 (usually May) and the only significant reinforcement, the 2nd SS Panzer Corps riding long partisan-infested rail lines, won't get into action until March.

There is enormous variability from game to game in Russian replacement capacity in 1942. Historically, the Russians had 14 worker factors in November and averaged 11 factors/turn through the year. In most games, the average is less: 10 worker factors/turn through the year and 12 in November, because Leningrad or the Donets valley fall well ahead of the historical schedule. If Archangel or Moscow falls as well, the Russians are in hot borsch. There is no use discussing the middle game when the Russians have stumbled that badly. We will assume the Russians have done no worse than lose Leningrad and post an average replacement rate of 10 factors/turn through 1942. The Red Army should then muster 30-40 armies, 40%-50% of which should be Guards and armor, an ample force to gouge the Wehrmacht in one carefully chosen sector.

Which sector to choose? Common sense dictates choosing any sector vital to the Russians and threatened by the Axis. Leningrad, Moscow or Archangel would qualify. The Sudden Death city-objective for 1943 chosen before the game (24.3) would certainly mandate an offensive to save it, if threatened. A winter offensive in the Leningrad district is particularly nice since the Russians can advance over the frozen marshes. The same marshes, thawed out in spring, seriously impede an Axis counterthrust.

If all the above cities can be held or are irretrievably lost, the Russians should commit their offensive might against the sector that offers the best opportunity to knock off Axis units. Any area with a large proportion of non-German units make a good choice because those units are weaker and less mobile. Although destruction of non-German units may seem less important than eliminating German ones, mobility counts for less in 1943 because the line is fairly static. Consequently, dead non-German units are worth as much as dead German ones, and they are replaced more slowly, if at all.

The Russians should try to bag a few panzer units in the sweep too, but steer clear of an area with too many panzers. These big boys can break encirclements and cut off Soviet spearheads. The advan-

tage of limited Axis rail capacity in snow is forfeit if the Russians needlessly assault a sector rich in panzer forces.

It is extremely tempting to surround large pockets of Axis units; but the best policy is to break through on a broad front, eliminating as many units as possible by direct assault. Admittedly, there are strong historical precedents for envelopment tactics, Stalingrad and Korsun to name but two. And the disposition of Axis units during the winter is tempting. If the German commander arrays his army in a continuous front, sectors of the line between cities are out of combat-supply (rule 17.2 again) and weak. If he clusters around controlled cities, the Russians can roam at will through the gaps. However, the Russian player who surrounds a large pocket of German units in controlled cities and waits for them to starve will see spring arrive with the Wehrmacht intact and the Red Arse exposed.

*THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* is not *THIRD REICH*, guys! Surrounded units don't starve if they trace supply to an Axis-controlled city. The city itself does not have to trace supply anywhere. Call it unrealistic if you will, but that's the rules. Let's admit it is a compromise. Stalingrad held out in the war; Stalingrad didn't. Local factors are so important in whether a siege will work (e.g., a frozen lake that could take trucks, a snow-covered airport that couldn't take planes), that the designers could not make supply rules both absolutely realistic and simple.

The Russian player must adapt to the situation by keeping his envelopments manageable small. The purpose of envelopment is only to prevent the victims from being reinforced or withdrawing. It will still be necessary to eliminate them by direct assault (usually) or recapture of cities within the perimeter (sometimes).

Another way in which *TRC* differs from *3R* is that un supplied units can move. They can roll right out to the perimeter and attack in coordination with Axis units on the outside. Even low-odds attacks can succeed because the Russian retreats are cut off. The Russian player should, therefore, man the perimeter in doubled terrain or at least four hexes from Axis-controlled cities so that German units attacking on the outside will be half-strength. And the Russians must keep the Huns busy with multiple threats.

Since it is expensive to attack German units in supply near Axis-controlled cities, the Russians would be delighted to force the Germans to move out of their urban strongholds and attack out-of-supply. The Sudden Death rules provide a means of doing just that. Assuming the Russians are in firm control of their own objective for 1943, they can put great pressure on the Axis by attacking all possible Axis objectives (Leningrad, Kharkov and the oil well at PP13) if Axis-held. If one of these attacks succeeds against the actual Axis objective, the Germans are compelled to counterattack or forfeit the game. It would be foolhardy for them to delay the attack, hoping for non-snow weather and a Stuka in March because there is a 33% chance of clear weather. If it is clear weather and the Russians control both objectives, the game ends immediately!

Consequently, the Germans have to counterattack in snow. Leningrad and the oil well are more than three hexes from any city so Axis units attacking them must be out of combat-supply. The Russians should be careful to occupy Kursk or put Y13 in a ZOC to prevent combat-supplied German units from reaching Kharkov.

Many players don't like and don't play the Sudden Death Victory Conditions (24.3), feeling that the rules force players into unnatural lines of play. As the Axis player, one might ask, would you really bust your treads getting to Sevastopol in 1941 if it were not a possible objective for 1942? Some games seemingly end prematurely with one side controlling both objectives for a year, but losing everywhere else on the board.

I personally like the Sudden Death rules for reasons that have to do with *TRC* both as a game and as a simulation of history. The rules improve *TRC* by shortening the length of play and intensifying the excitement. The middle game can get mighty boring as the two titans wrestle along a static line with no chance of deciding victory for two game-years, twelve turns and many hours later. With the Sudden Death rules in place, the game is never dull as players seek to deduce their opponent's objective and seize it while concealing the identity of their own. Such behavior is not a departure from history, either. By Sudden Death rules Russia won the war in Spring 1943, controlling both their own objective, Stalingrad, and the German's, the oil well at PP13. Without these rules, players would seldom fight a do-or-die battle like Stalingrad. There were no economic or strategic reasons why a single obscure city on the Volga should have been so important; but there were several psychological-propaganda reasons, also of importance in war, and they are simulated well by the Sudden Death rules.

Choosing Russian Sudden Death objectives intelligently before the game is an important aspect of turning the tide. If they are chosen inappropriately, the Russian commander won't have freedom to act in late '42. If your opponent is known to focus on the north, choose objectives in the south and *vice versa*. If your opponent is unknown to you, choose Kharkov for 1942 and Stalingrad for 1943. The reason for the former is that Army Group South has to traverse some tough defensive terrain to reach Kharkov. AG South is less well provided with panzers than AG Center, and loaded with slow non-German units. Kharkov is a major city, doubling the defenders and adding a two-factor worker unit to the defense. Too, Kharkov can be reached by replacement units generated in many nearby cities. In contrast, Kalinin is a minor city square in the path of a major German thrust, logically aimed at Moscow. Sevastopol is more defensible but tough to reinforce, and many units defending the Crimea would readily mark Sevastopol as the objective.

Stalingrad is the logical choice for 1943 because it is farthest from the west edge of the board. It is a major city amidst strong river lines and near the east edge of the board where reinforcements arrive. Voronezh, three hexes farther west, is an acceptable alternative, but *never* choose Moscow as an objective. The Germans will be aiming at Moscow anyway, for the sake of its workers, railroad connections and capital city status. Why give them any more benefit.

The objectives in later years have nothing to do with "turning the tide"; but since the subject has not been addressed previously, I will complete the list. In 1944 I choose Kursk, a minor city and easiest to recapture. In 1945, choose Bucharest. The Germans then have to retain Warsaw or Lwow to keep you from winning. Table 1 lists the Sudden Death objectives for both sides in order of preference.

The last aspect of turning the tide to consider are the Optional Rules and Campaign Variants. The Optional Rules are easy. All but two of them favor the Russians. The "SS Replacement Substitution" and

"First Impulse Attacks on Cities" (26.2 and 26.7 respectively) are pro-Axis, but have minor impact. No problems with these Optional Rules; accept what feels comfortable.

Among the Campaign Variants, "Artillery Corps" favors the Russians, since they get more of them. "Sea Transport" too is pro-Russian, since on average the Russians have more ports. The "Alternative Strategic Scenarios" are a mixed bag, however: "Mediterranean Distraction" is strongly pro-Axis because of the extra turn in '41 and the Fliegerkorps. "Putting the Bulge on the Russians" is always a bright Teutonic notion. Why not? A draw is historically meaningless anyway.

The other two German options, "Italian Sell-Out" and "Not Tunisia", are bum deals for the Axis.

The Russian player should respond as follows when the Fuehrer eschews a "Mediterranean Distraction" and attacks Russia in March: if the weather is clear and the German player competent, activate the "Russian Reaction" option. You will need the Siberian reinforcements early to save Moscow. Otherwise, leave the option alone, avoiding the risk of a "Japanese Gambit".

This concludes our look at the middle game and "turning the tide". You won't see a sequel on the late game because the situation is so variable that general analysis is impossible. Suffice to say that any Russian player on the defensive in 1944 should ask for a draw. On the offensive, the same tactics that worked in Winter 1942, work in 1943; and with no Stuka around in 1944, the Russians can continue their offensive even in non-snow weather through the year and on to Berlin. *Urrah!*

TABLE 1  
SUDDEN DEATH OBJECTIVES

by year in order of preference		
	Axis	Russia
1942	1. Bryansk 2. Dnepropetrovsk 3. Leningrad	1. Kharkov 2. Kalinin 3. Sevastopol
1943	1. Kharkov 2. Leningrad 3. oil well (PP13)	1. Stalingrad 2. Voronezh 3. Moscow
1944	1. Riga 2. Kiev 3. Sevastopol	1. Kursk 2. Rostov 3. Leningrad
1945	1. Warsaw 2. Lwow 3. Stalin	1. Bucharest 2. Berlin 3. Hitler



#### AH Philosophy . . . Cont'd from Page 2

much to offer the historical gamer, and the merging of the two in these pages into an amorphous melange could not but be detrimental to everyone's efforts, I felt.

Still another problem would be my own limited familiarity with the Victory Games products. In order to make even a cursory review of, much less edit and paste up, any article herein demands some working knowledge of the topic game and its systems. My past experience, along with badgering my way into every current AH play-test, assures me of at least a feeling of competency with respect to our expanding line. In those instances where a truly expert opinion is warranted, I can readily turn to the designer/developers in this building for immediate judgement or advice. Not so with Victory Games' admittedly complex simulations. Given the constraints on my time (i.e., other ongoing projects), I simply would feel neither competent nor comfortable expounding upon them. The task

would definitely demand someone enamored of these fine wargames, who was also blessed with the time to study them at leisure. At the very least, he should be able to, when necessary, grasp the guiding hand of those at Victory.

Another facet of that distance between our Baltimore base and the New York offices of Victory Games imposes itself as well. The two game companies have a number of different techniques, not always compatible. For over twenty years, *The GENERAL* has aimed at in-depth reportage of the games of The Avalon Hill Game Company. A number of exceedingly nagging technical problems would arise should I attempt to mix articles on VG and AH games. None were insurmountable, but all would demand an outlay of extra time and money.

With the creation of a new periodical (*HEROES*) and the arrival of Mr. Bill Peschel to become founding editor, a compromise suggested itself. Bill expressed an interest in the VG game line and offered his services in seeing articles on them into print. And concurrently it occurred to us that many of the technical problems could be sidestepped by printing the VG articles separately from the print run of *The GENERAL*. Thus, the *Victory Insider* was born, an extensive insert devoted to the products of our sister company yet enjoying the wide distribution of wargaming's oldest continuously published magazine. By turning over this insert to Bill, who is able to coordinate closely with the staff at VG, I was able to efficiently solve the dilemmas facing me. Now, and henceforth, the *Victory Insider* will supply the kind of support for their products that has been a hallmark of The Avalon Hill Game Company for twenty years.

Of course, not all the difficulties were immediately settled; but at least those remaining were manageable. The first and hardest decision to make was that to raise the cover and subscription prices of *The GENERAL* to allow the twelve-to-twenty page full-color insert to become a regular feature. This was instituted with Vol. 20, No. 4 without prior warning; and, as usual, such a move brought an outpouring of distress and disgust to this office. Hopefully, those who lamented the increase are satisfied with value returned for such.

Bill Peschel was forced to work many long hours in deciding on the format and layout for his "mini-magazine". I think most discriminating gamers will agree that he succeeded in producing an eye-pleasing and information packed insert. That he continues to do so is a credit to him and the entire staff at Victory Games who contribute so heavily to each issue. Obviously Bill brings a professional approach to his distinctive layout. I suspect that many of our readers will turn to "Thrilling Tales of Victory", "W. Bill's Oversights" and the fine articles with as much anticipation as they do to the "AH Philosophy", "Letters to the Editor" and "Infiltrator's Report".

Of course, all is not smooth sailing yet. Co-ordination difficulties still arise. The production of the *Victory Insider* will occasion delays in final mailings for several issues yet. And Bill notes a singular lack of submitted articles from the readership. But at the very least, we are trying. Like any sibling, *The GENERAL* looks with pride on the growth of our "little sister", despite her current teething. May she grow into a beautiful lady.

In conclusion, the appearance of the *Victory Insider* is a unique experiment for the staid *GENERAL*. Both Bill Peschel and I would like to hear the reactions of you, the readers. Questions, suggestions, advice, complaints, all grist for the mill.



# THE IDEOLOGICAL FACTOR

## Benign German Occupation in THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

By Richard H. Eggleston

It is November 1941: light mud, barely serviceable airfields, marginal flying weather in the north. Over the past two months, strong German armored and infantry formations, aided by aircraft attached to Army Groups North and Center, have smashed through the Russian defenses to the suburbs of Leningrad, encircling the city from the south, west and east. Despite the weather, it is inevitable that the few remaining Soviet forces will be driven from Leningrad either this month, or in December at the latest.

But in the south, the siege of Rostov—gateway to the Caucasian oilfields and to Stalingrad—has bogged down. Most of the panzer and panzergrenadier divisions diverted from the north during the summer encirclement of Kiev have suffered serious losses. Courtesy of the Red Air Force, the weapons, vehicles and other equipment of three Hungarian mechanized infantry divisions that attempted in October to land on the coast northeast of Rostov are, for the most part, at the bottom of the Black Sea. Soviet reinforcements and replacements are pouring into the area. To make matters worse, autumn rains have rendered the Luftwaffe's forward airstrips virtually unusable. The only bright spot for the Axis is their uncontested control of the Kiev-Rostov rail line to a point just to the southwest of Rostov.

Elements of Army Group Center's Panzer Army, fresh from their victorious drive on Leningrad, are pulled back and entrained for swift deployment to the southern front. The men and equipment of three panzer corps roll southwest by rail through eastern Poland, then east again through the western Ukraine . . . until suddenly, sixty-five miles southwest of Kiev, small arms and mortar fire bring the trains to a halt. The railroad bridges, so painstakingly repaired by German combat engineers, lie in ruins. Mile upon mile of railroad track is torn up. Partisans. The German commander asks, "What did I do to deserve this?"

The German occupation of Soviet, Polish and Yugoslav territory during the Second World War was virtually unprecedented for its ruthlessness and brutality. Underlying this brutality was Hitler's ideological obsession with the need to create *Lebensraum* for ethnic German colonists, to control and exploit the great mass of Slavic "subhumans" and, in the USSR, to exterminate all communist party functionaries as well. The ideological conviction that Slavs were racially inferior had a number of important consequences. Together with inadequate military intelligence, it led Hitler to seriously underestimate the fighting abilities of Soviet troops. More to the point, this view formed the basis for the calculated German policy of starving and/or executing millions of prisoners-of-war, civilians and party officials. The most significant result was the creation of a vast resistance movement behind German lines which seriously disrupted military communications at the most inopportune moments and, concomitantly, diverted scarce German resources to non-productive (and savage) security operations. Not surprisingly, non-White Russian nationalities (particularly the Ukrainians) which had aspired to some form of autonomy and were initially disposed to welcome German victory reacted to German terror tactics by quickly developing an all-consuming hatred for their tormentors.

As early as 1941, senior field commanders and intelligence officials began attempting to persuade Hitler and Nazi Party leaders of the need to moderate

German occupation policies, to enlist the support of anti-communist nationalist groups and to create a limited number of frontline combat units from Russian prisoner-volunteers. Soviet General Vlasov, captured in the summer of 1942, had great personal appeal and might well have served as the vehicle for pursuing such a policy. Instead, the German "moderates" were ignored or scorned; Vlasov's so-called "Russian Army of Liberation" existed primarily on paper until the eleventh hour—by that time it was too late and German credibility had been destroyed. There are many who believe that Hitler's refusal to consider a sensible occupation policy contributed significantly to Germany's defeat in Russia, and hence in the Second World War.

Germany's failure to accurately estimate the difficulties posed by fighting on and occupying Russian soil is taken into consideration in the rules of numerous wargames dealing with the Eastern Front. In *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* for example, the proper use of Partisans can have a decisive effect on the outcome of the game. Thus far, however, there has been relatively little interest in what might have occurred had the Germans exercised better judgement. The ensuing variant assumes just such a occurrence—it postulates that the rule of reason (or perhaps a fit of intuition) caused Hitler to subordinate his ideological theories to a recognition of the military and economic benefits that would be realized from benign treatment of the occupied eastern territories. The variant also assumes Hitler was not completely misled by the massive internal purges which nearly destroyed the Soviet officer corps during the mid-1930's or by the Red Army's abysmal performance in the Winter War with Finland. On the contrary, he suspects that these events might lead to fundamental military reforms which could reduce the likelihood of a decisive German victory in 1941. The chief effects of Hitler's *volte-face* are summarized below and appear in the variant.

Soviet citizens eagerly accepted their German conquerors, greeting them as liberators from the despised rule of the ruthless communist political commissars and NKVD functionaries. To the extent practicable, the Germans reciprocated, introducing local autonomy by retaining and giving limited authority to indigenous civilian officials. German Gauleiters were selected primarily for proven administrative skills; SS formations were restricted to front-line service and, therefore, did not participate in security operations. Soviet secret police officials were simply transferred into German intelligence organizations or were remanded to local authorities for punishment of their crimes; other party members were "re-educated" and returned to assist in administration (or secretly eliminated if uncooperative—the Germans did not change *that* much). The total mobilization of the German women in 1940 rendered forced labor in the Reich by foreigners unnecessary; and large numbers of volunteers were recruited from the millions of Russian prisoners taken during the great encirclements of 1941 and 1942. With uncharacteristic foresight, the Germans formed these volunteers into infantry units led primarily by disaffected Red Army officers and Russian-speaking ethnic Germans from the former Baltic Republics (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia).

The capture of General A.A. Vlasov in July 1942 finally provided the volunteer formations with the high quality military leadership that they needed. Vlasov, a brilliant field commander who had just

experienced one too many encirclements as a result of the STAVKA's incompetence, quickly and enthusiastically turned on his former masters. By early September of 1942, the "Vlasov Army" consisted of three full-strength, German-equipped infantry divisions ready for frontline service. The number of additional volunteer divisions that were eventually raised fluctuated between three and nine, depending upon the availability of supplies, equipment and volunteers from among prisoners and military-age men in the territory under German control. Even the possibility of receiving reliable Russian reinforcements gave German commanders incentive to deliberately seek to capture rather than annihilate enemy formations.

Although the "Vlasov Army" and associated volunteer units did not decisively affect the course of military operations, there were other substantial direct and indirect benefits from the benign occupation policy. Partisan recruitment and operations became exceptionally difficult for the Soviets in certain areas. In fact, Partisans were unable to operate effectively anywhere in the former Baltic Republics, the Ukraine or former Polish territory occupied by the Soviet Union in 1939. Without support from the local populace, fledgling partisan operations withered. German manpower which otherwise would have been required for security operations in these areas was freed for more pressing duties, permitting the formation of numerous additional infantry units to replace front-line losses. Finally, although the severity of the winter of 1941-1942 crippled Axis combat operations, the supply problems were soon rectified with the thaw. As a result, Axis troops were sufficiently well-supplied in subsequent winters to engage Soviet forces at full strength.

The Russian Campaign for the Germans was a conventional war of imperialism and conquest, without the encumbrance of ideological baggage. Although the German High Command recognized that giving limited autonomy to the occupied territories and even establishing volunteer military formations might well lead to future problems, they were sufficiently shrewd to realize that failure to do so might have more immediate and serious consequences. The variant attempts to illustrate, then, what might have occurred had the Nazis ceased to behave like Nazis. Such a proposition may appear to be preposterous, but upon reflection, few would disagree that their historical behavior was equally ridiculous. With this variant, we can explore one of the great "what-ifs" of history. Few other games even consider the broad implications of the ideological factor in World War II.

### RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN VARIANT: Benign German Occupation in the USSR

This variant may be used in the Campaign Game or in conjunction with suitable existing scenarios and variants. It is suggested that the optional rules which benefit the Russian player be adopted if this variant is to be used.

- 1) Permanently remove from the game one of the Partisan units scheduled to enter on Game Turn 3.
- 2) Partisans may *never* be placed in the following cities:

Ukraine: Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, Stalino, Dnepropetrovsk

Crimea: Sevastopol

Former Baltic Republics: Tallinn, Riga, Taunus

Former Polish Territories: Brest, Lwow

3) Partisans may *not* be placed on railroad hexes that connect the following locations:

Kiev and: Brest, R26, T27 Odessa, Kharkov, Stalino, Dnepropetrovsk, Sevastopol, W15

Brest and: P23, O22

L23 and: L22

J22 and: E14

4) SS units have no more effect on Partisans than other Axis units.

5) During the Winter of 1941-1942, the "snow month" rules of 1942-1943 apply to German and Axis units. In the Winter of 1942-1943 (and subsequent winters), German and Axis units are subject to the same supply rules as the Russians.

6) Two additional infantry corps become available in 1942 and succeeding years on the annual replacement turn (see Rules 21) so long as German troops occupy any Soviet territory. Use 3-4 German corps if available; otherwise, Axis infantry or cavalry corps of identical (or lesser) strength may be used.

7) At the beginning of the September 1942 turn, the Vlasov Army automatically becomes available as a reinforcement. The Vlasov Army is a 3-4, Axis-type corps which, if destroyed or surrendered, becomes available again as a reinforcement at the beginning of the *third* turn following its loss. If the Vlasov Army is lost on any turn in which there are no German units on Soviet territory, it is removed permanently from the game. The Vlasov Army enters the game in any of the Axis-controlled cities listed in Rule 2 above.

8) Surrendered Soviet units are not immediately removed from the game; rather, they are kept in a separate pile of building volunteer units.

9) Volunteer infantry units may be formed with the following prerequisites:

a) take any three surrendered Soviet units and remove them permanently from the game; and

b) from the list of cities in Rule 2 above, control at least two major and one minor city.

10) A volunteer unit may be created at any time the conditions in Rule 9 are met so long as the cities involved are under Axis control at the moment the unit is formed. However, such units may not enter the game until the *sixth* game-turn and must be introduced in one of the Axis-controlled cities in Rule 2.

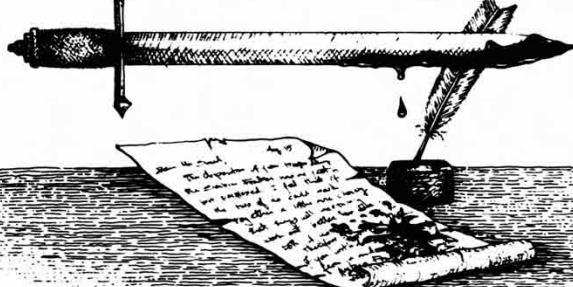
11) Cities involved in creating volunteer units may only be used *once* for this purpose. However, the loss of the city involved has no effect on a volunteer unit once it has been created.

12) Volunteer units are never replaced; they are lost permanently. The maximum number of such units that can be formed is three (excluding the Vlasov Army). Volunteer units are rated as 3-3 Axis-type infantry corps.

With these simple rules, the historian-gamer can explore Germany's chances given a benign occupation. Needless-to-say, much could be learned by applying similar rules in other games. One of the most fascinating aspects of our hobby is its endless variety. And its potential for education and fun. The above variant succeeds in all, I feel.



# The Compleat Diplomat



c. keller

## I Give Up . . . But Not to You, Fella!

By Rod Walker

The "Suicide Ploy" is one of the most common you will meet with in *DIPLOMACY*. It is frequently also one of the least effective. It is common because it is a "knee-jerk" reaction to a really stunning stab. It is often ineffective for the same reason. And yet, it *can* be a great diplomatic weapon in your arsenal. So let's talk about it here.

First of all, what is the "Suicide Ploy"? Very simple, really. You've all seen/heard it at one time or another in multi-player games, I'm sure. You stab some guy—whose back no doubt deserved that knife—and he turns on you to swear he'll commit suicide (figuratively, of course). He intends to work to give all his centers to some other player so you'll get few or none. This may be simple revenge, but it usually is followed by an "unless" . . . usually then followed by a demand for return of whatever it was that you got in the stab and so forth.

How do you react to this sort of a threat? How do others react when and if you make it yourself? Although the maker of the threat always wants it taken seriously, reactions in fact vary. All too often they vary from indifference to outright scorn. That's not what you want, at least when you're making it. Avoiding that and getting the proper reaction, or at least getting the proper result in the end, is a tricky maneuver demanding finesse and patience.

Revenge is a very poor reason for suicide . . . if for no other reason than the fact that if revenge is truly the only option open to you, your position is probably too far gone for you to be able to bring it off. Furthermore, once you promise a suicide as revenge, you are pretty much obligated to go through with it or lose credibility in future games. Of course, the progress of the game might give you good reason to change your mind. But if, as often happens, you have a change of heart and decide to try for survival instead, people will begin not to take you seriously (and often not just in matters of "suicide" alone, either).

No, the "Suicide Ploy" really works best when you have a good reason for making the threat and a good chance of making it stick.

*A good reason.* You need a cause to be dying for. "If you don't get out of my home centers, I'll suicide against you." There needs to be a concrete demand, a condition under which the "suicide" will be called off. This also lends credibility to your threat by allowing it to be given in cold blood, not the heat of the moment. This gives you options and a negotiating position. It is not irrevocable.

*A good chance.* Many players make the "suicide" threat, for whatever reason, without thinking too much about it. It is very important to determine whether you actually have the strength and position with which to resist your prime opponent while allowing some other player(s) into your remaining

centers. If you can't resist effectively, don't even think about using the "Suicide Ploy" unless your opponent is a cretin (and if he is, how did he pull off such a devastating stab against *you*).

Once you have threatened suicide, and the threat has produced no results, you must now go through with it, scrupulously until your opponent stops attacking you. There can be no turning back, no attempts to defend your other centers from other players, no regrets. This sort of threat depends entirely on its credibility: your diplomatic position, your military position, and the full expectation that you will follow through.

Now, what can you expect to gain through "suicide"? Sometimes you will gain absolutely nothing; you'll get eliminated. Good, at least you have made real your threat. However, the threat, when convincingly presented, can turn the game around for you sometimes. The player who stabbed you normally expects two things. First, he expects some significant gains. Second, and partly in consequence of the first, he expects to win the game. Your suicide action effectively denies him his first expectation; worse, you are making sure that someone else gets much of what he was expecting. Now, that player may be his ally at the moment, but how long can he allow you to take an action that might well throw the game to another . . . even if he is an ally? If your situation is otherwise hopeless after a stab, and you have no other way to get an alteration in the alliance structure, the "Suicide Ploy" is an often effective way to get somebody to back off, barring the circumstances of being opposed by a too-close alliance.

Of course, some people play *DIPLOMACY* on the "buddy system". That is a very poor way to approach it. In fact it isn't really playing the GAME at all; it's just going through the motions. If your "suicide" is failing because two allies are too close and show signs of playing the whole game that way, your diplomacy should be aimed at getting every other player on the board to attack them and eliminate them so that the rest of you can play the game the way Allan Calhamer intended it to be played.

Even so, however temporary they may be, any alliance can be for awhile a real "buddy-buddy" system. If both benefit, why not? There can even be circumstances in which you'd let an ally into a home supply center. "What," you say, "how can that be? I'd never *let* even my own mother into a home center!" No? Well, think again, because sometimes you really should. And that's the subject of our next excursion into duplicity, treachery, brute force, and the other cardinal virtues of *DIPLOMACY*.





# SOVIET UNION—1941

## Melding Two Classics

By Dean Miller

*STALINGRAD* is one of the most popular of the AH games. It has much going for it. The game is easy to learn, and easily balanced. It lends itself well to play-by-mail. The board vividly depicts the vastness of the Russian landscape and the unit counters are both legibly and attractively designed, things which most of the Russian campaign games lack. The subject matter is one which is of perennial interest to wargamers. Yet the game fails to live up to the promise which I believe most often motivates its purchase—to enable the player to duplicate the Russo-German conflict, permitting him to experience history's greatest "what if". For once the game is begun, it soon becomes apparent that the movement of the unit counters across the game-board is not going to resemble the actual campaign. Instead of blitzkrieg, we have *sitzkrieg*.

Since *STALINGRAD* was brought out, the art of wargaming has advanced considerably. Games have been designed which do permit players to simulate campaigns as they were performed in the era of lightning war. Probably the best of these is *FRANCE 1940*. With its fluid zones of control, its mechanized movement phase, its use of air units and its CRT, this game permits the breakthroughs and encirclements which characterized the blitzkrieg, and were most strikingly employed in the Russian conflict. Yet there has been no attempt to merge these features to AH's *STALINGRAD*. This is not to say that there have been no variants—past issues of *The GENERAL* abound with them. But these have usually required their own extensive new set of rules and, quite often, new unit counters; most have for some reason, ignored the potential of adaptation of *FRANCE '40* techniques.

Nor have other designs which apply the *FRANCE 1940* method of play to this war been lacking. Inevitably, however, the games which others have produced have also been deficient in some serious respect—the board and/or the counters are on the wrong scale, the rules are unclear in some essential respect, and so forth. Probably their most important failing, however, is their lack of the support and expertise that the Avalon Hill Game Company brings to all its products. It is usually impossible to find opponents (particularly PBM), get rules interpretations, replacement parts, all those things which AH provides so well. This, then, is an attempt to merge two great AH games—*STALINGRAD* and *FRANCE 1940*, and in the process correct the foregoing litany of ills.

To begin with, you of course use the *STALINGRAD* game board and unit counters. From the *FRANCE 1940* components add the air units and the CRT. The rules are a combination of both, with a minimum of modifications. Let me review them, in no particular order:

**Stacking:** Either side can place up to three units on a hex, as in *STALINGRAD*. The ground support and air unit counters count as one for this purpose, as in *FRANCE 1940*.

**Movement:** Movement is according to the movement factor on the counters, with minor exceptions. Air ground support units have a movement factor of 3, *half* that indicated on the counter. The German air units have a range of five hexes; the Russians, four. Movement in rough terrain and swamps is one hex per turn as in *STALINGRAD* unless the hex is in an enemy zone of control, and the unit wishing to enter lacks sufficient additional move-

ment factors to do so. Russian cavalry *also* may move in the Mechanized Movement Phase.

**Railroads:** A unit may have a railroad bonus of ten hexes (five in snow months) subject to the same rules as in *STALINGRAD*, with minor exceptions. First, no unit may advance into enemy territory on a railroad. This will correct an anomalous but devious *STALINGRAD* rule, which the Mechanized Movement Phase now makes unnecessary. Railroad hexes which are in captured territory may not be used until friendly units have first advanced over them at the regular movement rate. Secondly, the railroad bonus is only available in the *first* movement phase—it may not be used in the Mechanized Movement Phase. Third, a unit may not advance into a zone of control while using the railroad bonus; it must revert to normal movement rate in entering the hex subject to the enemy ZOC. Finally, no more than six German units may use the railroad bonus on Russian railroads in any turn.

**Zone of Control:** These rules are the same as in *FRANCE 1940*, except that it costs *two* factors to enter a zone of control, one to leave and three to go from one to another, in addition to the usual movement cost.

**Combat:** This follows the *FRANCE '40* system, with some exceptions. First, as many as three units may attack from or defend a given hex. Attacks cannot be divided into more than one battle against defending units on the same hex. If three units are defending and the result is a CA, all three must counterattack—it makes for a whopping attack on one poor unit (as in *FRANCE 1940*, only the weakest unit is the subject of counterattack), but doesn't destroy playability or realism! Second, in attacks

on units defending in cities, swamps and mountains, two is subtracted from the die roll. The same is true for attacks where all the attacking units are on river hexes. Third, *FRANCE 1940* retreat priorities apply, except that no hexes are treated as fortification hexes.

**Snow Months:** This is determined as in *STALINGRAD*, but with slightly different effects. All units require one additional movement factor to enter each hex (except a mountain or swamp hex where the movement rate remains a maximum of one hex per turn). The railroad bonus is cut in half to five hexes per turn. The same swamps, lakes, and rivers are frozen over and become plain hexes as in the original *STALINGRAD*.

**Mud Months:** This is also determined as in *STALINGRAD*; all units require an additional movement factor to enter each square (except mountain or swamp hexes where the movement rate remains a maximum of one hex per turn). Railroad bonus, lakes, rivers and swamps are not affected in any manner.

**Air Units:** All rules from *FRANCE 1940* apply, except for the reduction of range and ground unit movement factors, noted above. Air units cannot be used in snow months. Germans begin with six air units; Russians, three.

**Reinforcements and Replacements:** The German player receives replacement factors at the rate of one Infantry and one Mechanized *factor* per month. Italians and Hungarians appear as in *STALINGRAD*. No replacement of German air units is permitted. The Russian player receives replacements according to the *STALINGRAD* schedule, but are not limited to units in the "dead pile". In other words, the size of the Russian army is unlimited [players may need an extra set of unit counters]. Only one-third of each turn's Russian replacement factors may be mechanized. Replacement factors may be accumulated. Mechanized replacement factors may instead be used to generate infantry units, if a player wishes to expend them in this manner. However, the reverse is not true and only mechanized replacement factors may generate new mechanized units. The Russians also receive an additional air unit in September 1941, December 1941, May 1942, and September 1942.

**Sequence of Play:** Same as in *FRANCE 1940*.

**Supply:** This too is the same as found in *FRANCE '40*, with one qualification. German units must be within 12 hexes of a railroad, which in turn leads back to the west edge of the board or Helsinki without obstruction by Russian units or zones of control to be in supply.

**Initial Setup:** As in *STALINGRAD*, German and allied troops cannot be adjacent to the border, but the Russians can. Also, the same rules on troops in Finland and movement across the narrows of the Sea of Azov found in *STALINGRAD* prevail.

**Victory:** The *STALINGRAD* rules on winning, and neutralization of Replacement Cities are followed.

Under these rules, the game takes on an entirely different complexion. The Russian must really sweat during 1941 to save his replacement cities, and the bulk of his army—both being vital to his survival. If he makes it to winter, the task becomes somewhat easier. As his replacements begin to accumulate, he gathers a counter-offensive reserve which is at first only of use in local situations, but gradually becomes the capability to mount a full scale offensive if not squandered. Allow me to voice a few tips for the Russian player here, for I consider his to be the more difficult task with the new rules.

At first the Russian must preserve his forces, while giving up real estate which is not crucial to his cause. He should try to funnel the German advance into the vast spaces. Allow him to extend his lines to the Caucasus if he wishes—you may have a *STALINGRAD* of your own in a year or so! In the

process, keep in mind that various units have different utility than in basic *STALINGRAD*. The mechanized (which includes cavalry) units are vastly more important, because of their mobility. Often the mechanized movement phase is vital in enabling a hole to be plugged. Even the maligned 2-3-6s are valuable here—it is often better to preserve them and use a 4-6-4 in a sacrifice situation.

The initial setup should include a mobile reserve, if possible. This should be given priority over crushing the Finns, in my opinion, although some may disagree. As in *FRANCE '40*, a continuous line should be maintained where possible, as otherwise the Germans can "percolate through" a vacant hex between two Russian units in the Mechanized Movement Phase and break into the rear. The two-factor cost to enter an enemy zone of control should constantly weigh in your planning of troop placements. It is often possible through strategic withdrawals to avoid combat with the German infantry. If in response, the German armor becomes overextended, you may be able to counterattack on favorable terms with your mechanized units. If it doesn't work out, simply pull them back to pre-planned defensive positions during the mechanized phase. Any loss of the German armor is a serious blow because of the reduced replacement rate. Keep this in mind when it comes time to mount your counter strokes.

In the meantime, try to position your units so as to reduce the possibility of a breakthrough and encirclement. This is the easiest way for you to lose the war, and it can happen in one move! If the Germans can break through and encircle enough units so that the Russians are no longer capable of conducting a defense, you've had it! A unit cut off here or there is unavoidable, perhaps. Indeed, it may be helpful—if it blocks a rail line momentarily, particularly. Just to require the German to allocate some forces to penning it in and eliminating it is of advantage. But to have a major portion of your army encircled is a disaster. With movement and attack

factors cut in half there is little the trapped units can do to extricate themselves, and the units which remain outside may be too few defensively, let alone to provide forces to break the encirclement.

Some may feel that this variant gives the Germans too much of an advantage. This can be readily corrected, as has been done in the basic *STALINGRAD* game, through adjustment of the replacement rate. Balance and realism might in such a case be achieved by giving the Russian immediate replacements at the rate of two Infantry factors per city per month, for example. We have found this version of the game to be exciting, challenging, and realistic, yet without an excess of new rules to learn. I believe it to be superior to all other games covering the Russian campaign to date. The number of pieces is not overwhelming, and the scale and game length are superior to any other game. And perhaps best of all, we have the benefit of the existing AH interpretations of the rules of the parent games to look to so that ambiguities should not arise. In the event that any do, I will be happy to provide a ruling. I am certain the same offer is extended by my excellent play-testers, Lowell Jackson, Dave Nelson and Bill Boyle!



## CONVENTION CALENDAR

The *GENERAL* will list any gaming convention in this space free of charge on a space available basis provided that we are notified at least four months in advance of the convention date. Each listing must include the name, date, site, and contact address of the convention. Additional information of interest to our readership such as tournaments or events utilizing The Avalon Hill Game Company's games is solicited and will be printed if made available.

The Avalon Hill Game Company does not necessarily attend or endorse these gatherings, nor do we guarantee that events using The Avalon Hill Game Company's games will be held. Readers are urged to contact the listed sources for further information before making plans to attend.

### FEBRUARY 9-10

**GATEWAY**, Lincoln, Nebraska

*Contact:* Merl Hayes, c/o Hobby Town, 130 North 13th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508.

### MARCH 1-3

**CONFLIX '85**, Sumter, South Carolina  
*Contact:* Mr. Thomas Powers, CONFLIX '85, USC-Sumter Wargamers Club, 200 Miller Road, Sumter, SC 29150.

*Note:* Tournaments in *KINGMAKER*, *DIPLOMACY* and *NATO* among others.

### MARCH 29-30-31

**CON-TEST II**, Tulsa, Oklahoma

*Contact:* Tactical Simulation Society, P.O. Box 4726, Tulsa, OK 74159.

### MARCH 30

**TIPPY-CON V**, Lafayette, Indiana

*Contact:* Mr. Randall Black, Tippy-Con V, P.O. Box 5596, Lafayette, IN 47904.

*Note:* Tournament in *SL* are on the broad-interest schedule.

### APRIL 27-28

**GOLD CON III**, Pompano Beach, Florida  
*Contact:* Mr. John Dunn, Omni Box Office, BCC North, 1000 Coconut Blvd., Pompano Beach, FL 33066. (305) 973-2249.

### MAY 25-26

**4th ANNUAL SQUAD LEADER OPEN**, Charlotte, North Carolina  
*Contact:* D.R. Munsell, 6101 McBride Street, Charlotte, NC 28215. (704) 535-7401.

*Note:* Five rounds of *SL* and its gamettes.

## SCENARIO 2000

# OPERATION HUBERTUS



### Board Configuration

Note that Scenario 2000 demands the use of boards 20, 21 and 22—not yet released as part of any gamette.

N ➤

22	1	
20	21	
8		

Note: The shaded portion of the mapboard is not in play (see Special Rule 2001.).

**STALINGRAD RUSSIA, 11 November 1942:** For Paulus, the battle for control of the city of Stalingrad had become the battle of attrition he feared. Shortages of ammunition and heavy weaponry were serious, but the crucial deficit lay in combat troops. None of the German divisions were near normal strength, and the only reinforcements being received were a trickle of convalescents returning to front-line duty. Paulus repeatedly appealed for major reinforcements, citing his casualties and arguing that recent directives on staff billets and urban minefields did little to augment his offensive forces. He felt strongly that time was running short for his Sixth Army to secure the remaining tenth of the devastated city still held by the tenacious 62nd Soviet Army.

As his forces regrouped in early November, Paulus worried. The Germans were not equipped for winter warfare and intelligence reports of increasing Russian activity along his northern flank augered a major enemy offensive. Paulus turned to his commanders for a final desperate effort to clear the city rubble—Operation *Hubertus*. All available forces were to be concentrated in a “Gruppe Schwerin”. New units, some four battalions of pioneers (each with 600 specialists trained in demolition of fortifications) then preparing to fly into Stalingrad, would lead the assault. A dozen experimental assault guns mounting 150mm guns would join other armored vehicles for the street fighting. To reduce certain strongpoints, 210mm howitzers maintaining a steady fire for several days. General Paulus emphasized these extraordinary preparations in an order to his troops on the eve of the attack. At the same time, however, special aid stations and field burial formations quietly moved up to the front lines.

When the officers of the pioneers arrived in Stalingrad on 9 November, they were met by Major Josef Linden, who was to command their phase of the operation. Among the targets shown them was the Red Barricade Gun Factory; Linden appraised it with glum foreboding, “loosely hanging corrugated steel panels that creaked eerily in the wind; a perfect mess of iron parts, gun barrels, T-beams, huge craters.” Cellars were turned into strongpoints. Every unturned stone threatened a booby trap. At the Barricade plant, the combat engineers were ordered to aim their first assaults at two Russian strongpoints—one called the “Chemist’s Shop” and the other known as the “Red House”. The troops began the careful chore of preparing their demolition charges and flamethrowers, confident that they would take both within a matter of minutes.

The Soviet defenders were well aware that a German offensive was in the offing. Newly compressed into a zone only six miles long and one mile deep, with the freezing river at their backs, the weary soldiers entrenched themselves in cellar bunkers protected by heavy machineguns and anti-tank guns. Steel plates with holes drilled through exposed only the muzzles of the guns, while mines and booby traps were strewn with abandon. Penal companies were organized into tank-killer close combat groups. Heavy artillery shells were withheld by the Front Command, but Chuikov was able to distribute sparse ammunition and food supplies to the men still in the factories. Chuikov was in desperate straits. In the predawn darkness he sent a despairing message, “Deliveries of supplies have fallen through for three days running. Reinforcements have not been ferried across, and our units are feeling the acute shortage of ammunition and rations.” The weeks of fighting had begun to take a toll on even the stolid Russian morale, and the commissars of the 62nd Army were ordered into the front lines to maintain discipline.

At 0300 hours on 11 November, *Hubertus* opened with a short and violent barrage. Ten battalions of German infantry, supported by tanks and pioneers, stormed toward the Barricade Factory, the Red October Factory and nearby ruins. Paulus had launched his latest, and as it would turn out last, bid to capture the city.

### VICTORY CONDITIONS

Victory is evaluated on the basis of points, which are gained for the control of buildings. Each building of three or more ground-level hexes *east* of the “Start Line” (see Special Rule 2009.) controlled (solely) by the German player at the conclusion of play is worth a number of Victory Points equal to the number of ground-level hexes of that building. (*Example*: sole control of the building centered on hex 22V2 brings three VP; of that centered on hex 20H3, six VP.) Each building of four ground-level hexes *west* of the “Start Line” controlled by the Soviet player is likewise worth a number of Victory Points equal to the number of ground-level hexes of that building. At the conclusion of play, the number of Soviet Victory Points is subtracted from the total number of German Victory Points. The result is then applied to the following criteria:

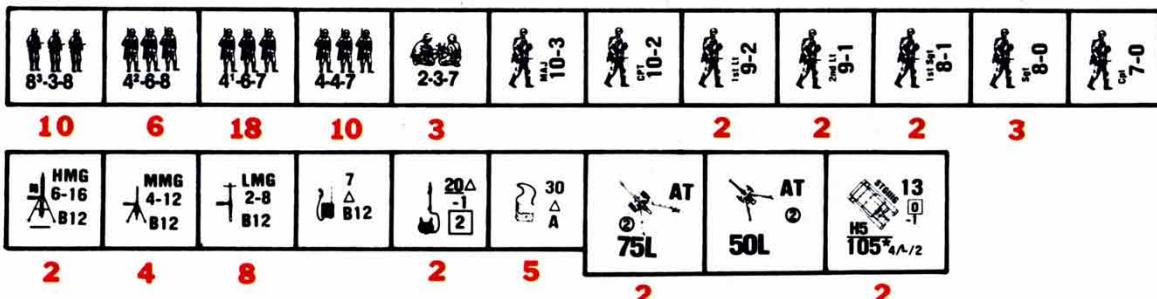
- 1 points and below = Decisive Soviet Victory
- 0 points to 45 points = Tactical Soviet Victory
- 46 points to 60 points = Tactical German Victory
- 61 points and above = Decisive German Victory

## **TURN RECORD TRACK**

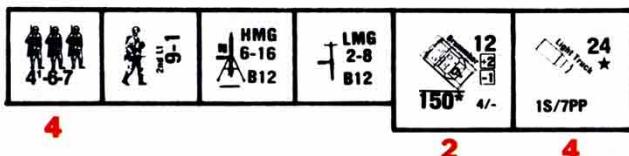
0430 Hours, 11 November 1942

Russian Sets Up First	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
German Moves First	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>

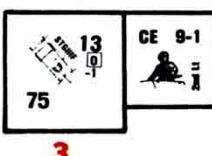
**Elements 389th Infantry Division, 389th and 162nd Pioneer Battalions, and 244th StG Battalion [ELR 4]** on any whole hex west of the "Start Line (see Special Rule 2009.):



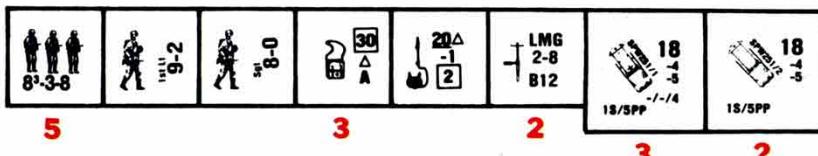
**Reserves of 389th Infantry Division [ELR 4] enter any west board edge hex on Turn 3:**



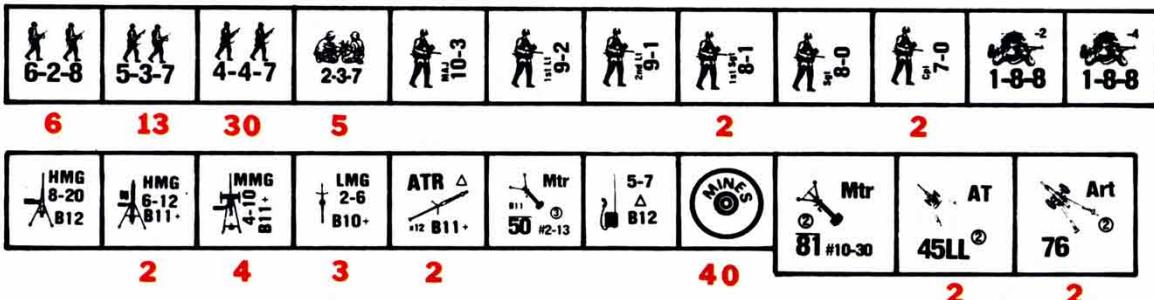
**Elements 244th StG Battalion enter any west board edge hex on Turn 5:**



**Elements 45th Pioneer Battalion [ELR 4] enter any west board edge hex on Turn 7:**



**Unorganized Elements** 138th Rifle Division [ELR 3] on any whole hex of Board 20 and/or 21 east of the "Start Line" (see Special Rule 2009.):



**Remnants 1053rd Rifle Regiment [ELR 3]** on any whole hex on Board 8, west of river (see Special Rule 2010.);





**Lead Elements 84th Tank Brigade [ELR 3]** enter any south board edge of Boards 20 and/or 8 on Turn 6:

6-2-8	5-2	5-0	LMG 2-6 B10-	16 4/2	12 4/2+
9	2	3		76L 4/2	2

## SPECIAL RULES

**2001.** Only hexrows A through P, inclusive, are playable on Board 1 and Board 21; only hexrows R through GG, inclusive, are playable on Board 7.

**2002.** Overlay D is placed on Board 22 normally.

**2003.** Woods, as such, do not exist. Instead, consider all woods hexes as stone rubble. Rubble covers the entire hex, and blocks LOS along a hexside.

**2004.** The stream is dry (157.2); treat it as a gully for all purposes.

**2005.** The river is deep, running at normal level, with a moderate current flowing south.

**2006.** Environmental Conditions are moderate, with no wind.

**2007.** The following hexes are third-level building hexes: 21K4, IJ5 and 20H3.

**2008.** Given the weeks of fighting, the Soviet soldiers proved themselves expert engineers. The Soviet player may secretly designate any five ground-level hexes as fortified building hexes (161.).

**2009.** The "Start Line" runs along the road designated by the following hexes: 1P9, 1M8, II9, IF7, ID5, IC5, 22EE6, 22Y6, 22S7, 20T9, 20Y7, 20Z6, 20FF5 to 20GG6. German units must be initially placed west of these hexes; Soviet units, east. No units may start adjacent to any enemy unit.

**2010.** Soviet units of the 1053rd Rifle Regiment may not move, nor fire, nor engage in any activity prior to Turn 5 unless a German unit is within three hexes inclusive of any hex (whole or partial) of Board 8 and with LOS of a multi-man counter of the 1053rd Regiment. Should such an event occur, the Russian units are *immediately* released from all restrictions.

**2011.** The Russian player has available a 122mm OBA artillery module with scarce ammunition.

**2011.1** The Russian radio, in actual fact, represents a field phone. All rules for Field Phones are in effect.

**2012.** The German player has available a 105mm OBA artillery module with normal ammunition.

**2013.** The Brummbaer counters of the third turn German reinforcements actually represent the experimental SIG33Bs. For game purposes there is no difference between the vehicles, use the statistics for the Brummbaer throughout play.

**2014.** Field Promotions (115.) are not allowed.

**2015.** Beyond the OB snipers, neither side may generate snipers.

**2016.** Given the extent of the fighting, and the length of time the enemies have faced each other across the street, both players may Bore-Sight (78.) with all onboard ordnance. This does not apply to main armament of AFVs nor to any machineguns.

**2017.** The Russian player may exchange any or all of his mine factors for booby trap factors (136.1).

**2018.** Neither side is subject to Battlefield Integrity (93.).

**2019.** German units may not become Berserk (110.1) regardless of level of MC.

**2020.** *Orchard Road.* Any hex containing both orchard and road symbols (such as hex 20S5) is actually a tree-lined boulevard. Entrance of such a hex through a road hexside is identical to movement along any road. Same level hindrance rules do not apply to such hexes if that portion of the LOS from firer to target within these hexes never leaves the confines of the road depiction. Otherwise, orchard roads are identical to orchards in every respect.

**AFTERMATH:** The seven German divisions came on a three-mile front between Volkovstroyevskaya Street and the Banny Gully. Chuikov's troops leapt to meet the Germans head-on. The isolated Soviet command under Colonel Gorokhov attempted to relieve the pressure by counterattacking from the railway bridge over the mouth of the Mecheta towards the Tractor Factory. Fighting was unusually bitter, even by the fanatic standards of Stalingrad. Quarter was neither asked nor given.

Near the Red October factory, one batch of the German pioneer point troops ran into a Soviet assault group just moving into position. Inside a work hall, heavily armed soldiers fired point blank into each other. Some German units were forced back to their lines of departure; local Soviet counterattacks with a few tanks blunted other advances. The Chemist's Shop fell almost at once, but the occupants of the Red House fought off attacks throughout the day and night. Next dawn, when the engineers finally broke into the place, the Russian defenders hurried to the cellar. The Germans ripped up the floorboards, tossed down full gasoline cans and ignited them with rifle fire. Then they lowered and detonated satchel charges. At long last they were in full possession of the Red House; and there they stayed, trapped by withering fire from the Barricade Factory.

Meanwhile, elements of the German 305th and 389th Infantry Divisions made better progress, winning ground on the bank of the Volga around the devastated oil depot and Barricade plant. To the south, three German divisions were laboriously clearing ad-hoc Soviet bunkers. After five hours of the grim close-quarter fighting, Paulus committed his tactical reserve, overrunning the right flank of the Soviet 95th Division and reaching the Volga in the Red October plan on a frontage of about 600 yards. With that, the Soviet 138th Division was now cut off and isolated from the tattered remains of the 62nd Army. When Russian reinforcements tried to land from across the river, they were driven back by heavy flak and machinegun fire. The 138th, trapped in the angle (a wedge of land only four hundred yards wide and one hundred deep) behind the Red Barricade, was written off. But this time there was not the tension that there had previously been among the officers of the 62nd, for they knew this to be Paulus' last fling. Though the fighting was hard, and the fluid situation critical, they were optimistic

Casualties on both sides were extraordinarily heavy. Soviet and Nazi commanders both clamored for more men from higher headquarters and demanded detailed situation reports from subordinate commands, all in vain. The German 336th Engineer Battalion lost eighteen men to a booby trap even before they left their start positions. The Soviet 118th Guards Regiment defending the open ground in front of the Barricade had 250 men when the fighting began on 11 November; 244 were lost in the first five hours of fighting. The German engineers had lost 440 men in the same time period. At the oil depot, the 112th Guards Rifle Regiment commander could field less than 100 men in each of his battalions, and every other staff officer was dead. Lyudnikov's 138th Division numbered only seven hundred effectives. A number of regiments simply ceased to exist in the cauldron around the Red Barricade Factory.

Lyudnikov's division, the 138th, was in a very precarious position. Chuikov took to calling him by radio each hour to tell him help was on the way. This was pure bluff, intended to deceive German listeners; in fact Chuikov had no help to spare for Lyudnikov. The relief of the trapped division was to be a matter of creeping back towards his position building by building. Indeed, with the dawn of the next day, everywhere in the city the Soviet troops began to counterattack, block by block, house by house, room by room.

Despite the losses, the Germans doggedly resumed their attacks on the morning of the 12th. But such attrition could not long be taken and the rubbed city itself frustrated any efforts to coordinate operations. By the fall of evening, all four thrusts spearheaded by the pioneers had broken down into savage little battles that did not differ from the previous street fighting. Nothing had changed. Scores of clashes ebbed and flowed in the city for another three days. German and Soviet troops often found themselves defending positions in the same building. *Hubertus* was over; the Sixth Army could not clear the city.

At dawn on 19 November, Chuikov and Paulus and all their weary men in the ruins heard the boom of big guns carried by the wind from a new direction far to the northwest. That barrage heralded the Russian counterattack to relieve the city. Paulus' fight to take Stalingrad was over.



# '41 IS GONNA BE A GOOD YEAR

## Russian Play in THIRD REICH

By Nayyer Ali

*The following piece was originally being considered for inclusion in the Wargamer's Guide to THIRD REICH (to be released for ORIGINS). But alas, the constraints of space eliminated it from that special event. This issue proved the perfect opportunity to print Mr. Ali's fine article rather than let it languish in the files any longer.*

**THIRD REICH** is one of the most commonly written upon games in The *GENERAL*. Articles dealing with variants, historical background, strategy, specific campaigns, and specific countries abound. One country though, has not gotten equal treatment up to now; this, curiously, is the Soviet Union. There have been few articles dealing with Russian play, and even those concentrate mainly on what should be done before the war with Germany begins. I will also discuss play in the pre-1941 turns, but the gist of this article will deal with Russian play in those most crucial years, 1941 and 1942. If the Russians play well in these two years, everything else is secondary.



### Initial Placement

Let us first examine the forces at Stalin's disposal in the Fall of 1939. The Soviet land army is mainly a weak infantry force that is at once incompetent in battle and slow afoot (they can't even retreat rapidly). Some 50% (15 of 30) of the available Russian infantry are 1-3 units. These are best used to take up space and provide a trip-wire to slow down an enemy advance. As a combat force, or even for attrition factors, they are practically useless. Ten of the thirty infantry are 2-3 units. These will provide the backbone of the early Soviet defense. They can deal with two German infantry by themselves and possess a certain degree of offensive power. Put them in the marshes or behind a river, and they will give a good account of themselves.

So we come to the five remaining Russian infantry, the 3-3s. These five units are the heavy infantry of the Red Army. They stand equal to the German Volksgrenadiers and, due mainly to the fact that they are so much better than their Russian counterparts, the 3-3 units are an intimidating presence. Although it sometimes looks like the Germans have more air and armor units than they know what to do with, they don't. The Germans are very much willing to bypass the 3-3 infantry than fight them. So the question is, how does one turn the intimidation potential of the 3-3 infantry into a concrete and worthwhile advantage? This will be answered as I discuss the Soviet defensive set-up for the actual war.

We must examine the Russian armor force. This consists of six 3-5 armor units, one of which must remain in Moscow until Axis forces come within five hexes. These units are of very poor quality, being only slightly better than the Italian armor. Their combat factors makes them no better than Russian Guards infantry. Their five movement factors allow them to move only out of one ZOC per turn. But all of these shortcomings are made up by one superior quality, the ability to exert a zone of control. The placement and use of these six units will be very critical for the success of Russia in the early years of the war. Their main purpose will be to stand behind the front lines and contain, through their ZOC and movement capabilities, the German armored penetrations. A rule of thumb, always use infantry when you don't absolutely need armor. In Russia in 3R, lives are cheap, tanks are expensive.

The Soviet air force consists of three 5-4 air units. In quality, they are inferior to the Germans (and are saddled with a -1 modifier in air combat) but are equal to any but Italians and superior to the minor countries. Russia is not capable of rebuilding more than 15 air factors (unless BRPs are sent from England) before 1942. Until then, the air force should serve as an intimidator, too far behind the front to be counter-attacked, but still able to lend DAS. As far as using them in an attack role, they just don't have the numbers necessary to offset the Luftwaffe and give ground support in meaningful quantities until 1943. Air units are very expensive, and should not be used except in emergencies.

The Soviet fleet consists of three nine-factor units which, at first glance, can't do much. The Russian fleet cannot hope to challenge the Germans in open battle because of the -2 first modifier it has. This does not mean that the fleet is worthless. It can perform many important functions—such as supply units trapped in the Baltic States, invade Sweden,

or even invade the Baltic coastline later in the war when the German navy is in the west. It can also conduct critical sea transport or SR missions. Obviously, most of these duties will also be carried out later in the game when Russia is on the offensive, so it is important that the fleet be preserved. This should be done by basing all of the fleet in Leningrad and making sure that Leningrad doesn't fall. The navy should not be based in the Black Sea (for the only thing it can do there is invade Turkey, a very unwise move in my estimation).

It is now Fall '39 and the Poles, Italians, French, and English have set-up in an orthodox manner; now it is the Soviet's turn. A quick examination of Soviet goals in 1939 should lead to a correct set-up. Russia wants to occupy all of the East European cities, and take some simple precautions against a first-turn *Barbarossa*. In addition to the deployment limits, there are 13 infantry, two armor, and two air units to set up. The air force should be deployed with one 5-4 air wing in Leningrad and another in Kiev. The infantry should be placed along the front, with no gaps, and able to cover all the necessary cities. The armor must be behind the front and in the northern half (the area around Smolensk and Bryansk is suggested). The Germans only have four armored units, and can really only mount an attack in one region at this stage of the game. Figure 1 shows what an adequate initial set-up looks like.

### 1939

Assuming the Germans don't attack in '39 (which happens in over 95% of the games), what should Russia do for the next year and a half? This is a complex question, and I will answer it in due course. Before that though, I will indulge myself in a small digression.

Russia's chances of victory depend heavily on how the war in the west goes. Obviously, the longer France holds out, the better off Russia is. If the French fall in Spring '40 or earlier, it will probably be a quick game, and most likely the Allies will surrender and start over. But if the Allies play competently, and the Germans use the most common plan of attack (Poland-Low Countries-France) then France should hold out at the minimum until Summer '40. If France falls in the summer, then *Barbarossa* can begin by Winter '40. If this happens, the Russians are not doomed but will have to play an excellent game to win the war. If France fails after Summer '40, the scales tip in the favor of the Russians. So the key is having France surrender no earlier than Fall 1940. The Russian player can't do much about the Western Front, but he should badger the British into a serious commitment to France (five or six strong units; i.e., 3-4s and/or 4-5s), something the British are not always apt to do. What this amounts to is that, for the Russians, their fate is not completely in their own hands.

In Fall of 1939 the Russians watch as Germany rolls over Poland and prepares to invade the Low Countries and France. The Soviet player resigns himself to four to six turns of boredom and proceeds to do the following. In 1939 Russia captures East Europe and completely builds its force pool. This leaves 19 excess BRPs. Nine of these should be sent as foreign aid to Bulgaria. This serves two purposes: 1) it takes Bulgaria away from the Germans unless they are willing to pay the necessary foreign aid, and 2) it provides some needed intelli-

gence regarding German intentions vis-a-vis Turkey. A number of good German players like to attack Turkey as a means of both outflanking Russia and the British in Egypt. Russia should, however, never attempt a pre-emptive invasion of Turkey, unless she is reasonably sure that the Germans have Variant 7. In addition, the nine BRPs sent to Bulgaria would only be worth 1 BRP in 1941 after two YSS. The other ten BRPs can be used for intelligence efforts.

## 1940

1940, in most games, is a year in which normally very little occurs for Russia. The USSR should sit tight and wait until the war with Germany begins. BRP expenditure should be kept to a minimum, preferably nothing.

But what should Russia do when presented with German mistakes before 1941? There are three major mistakes Germany can make in this time frame that affect Russia. The first is no garrison in Finland. Finland doesn't have a port so the only German units in Finland are those initially placed there. The obvious question is, should Russia take Finland out in 1939 by using the offensive option, or attrition it away through 1940? I think the attrition option is much more productive. When taking out a minor country, the bottom line is how many BRPs it yields in 1941. When using the offensive option, it costs a minimum of 25 BRPs (10 for declaring war and 15 for an offensive) but yields only 13 BRPs ( $10 \times 30\% + 10$ ) in 1941. This is a net deficit of twelve. The attrition option is a much cheaper way of securing the northern flank.

The second mistake is a similar failure to garrison Rumania. This mistake should be exploited immediately. Rumania should be crushed in '39. This would allow Russia to take out Bulgaria in Spring '40 before the Germans can open up an SR route through Yugoslavia. Once Rumania has been captured, the only garrison should be a 1-3 in Bucharest. Russia cannot stop Germany from taking Rumania back when it wants to. Any garrison, therefore, just weakens the Russian front without serving a legitimate purpose.

The third mistake is the violation of the 20-factor East Front garrison. This allows Russia to attack Germany before Fall '41. This situation is not so clear-cut a decision as the other two were. In a two-player game, Russia should usually invade. In a multi-player game, they should not get involved if the French and/or British are doing very well. Only if France is in trouble, and it is clear that an invasion would help more than hurt should it be undertaken. The decision must be tempered by the fact that Russia does not have the military capability to mount a serious offensive against Germany (before '42).

*[None of these German mistakes should ever take place, but actually they happen quite often. I would estimate that one of them occurs in every five 3R games I play.]*

## 1941

1941 is the most important year for the Russian player. He must come out of it with most of his army intact, without having lost too much ground, and with his economy capable of counterattack. Before I begin discussing 1941, we should take a look at what forces Germany has for Barbarossa.

Germany can be expected to send 15-20 infantry units to the East. These are solid units that can help create a breakthrough, can hold ground, and can chew up the Russian front line in a series of 2-1 attacks. In addition to that, they are cheap to rebuild. Add in a number of weak Rumanian, Hungarian, and Finnish infantry whose purpose will be to flesh out the front and absorb attrition losses and the German has an infantry superiority—in fact if not in numbers.

Ten or eleven full strength armor units will join the attack. These units combine a high combat factor with a superior movement capability (they can exit 2 ZOCs per movement phase). They are an extremely devastating threat. It is possible for them to advance up to 14 hexes in one turn! The only way to contain them is by having a double line of defense. Establishment of a double line of defense will strain Russian resources to the maximum. It is how well you manage these resources, especially the armor, that will decide the game.

Germany will also have available its airborne unit. This unit is most valuable to the German war effort because it is capable of breaking a double line of defense. It does this by dropping on a second line unit and eliminating it. This allows exploiting armor to freely pass through this second line hex.

Some 30-35 German and Italian air factors will participate. Three minor air factors are also available. The German air superiority will be complete. It is imperative that Russia avoid air combat; Germany can afford to rebuild air factors, Russia can't. The German navy might possibly be available to shore bombard Leningrad. If it does so, the Russian fleet should intercept. If Leningrad falls, then the Russian fleet will be destroyed anyway, so it doesn't hurt to take a few Germans with you.

## Defensive Set-up

It is obvious from the comparison of forces that Russia will be on the defensive for a long while. What is the best defensive set-up to both minimize German gains in the first turn and keep Russian losses at a reasonable level? What I believe does the best job is shown in Figure 2. I have refined it with the help of many other gamers. The line of 1-3 infantry in the front provides a cheap way of stopping the German infantry. It also forces the panzers to create a breakthrough before advancing against the stronger second line.

The second line consists purely of 2-3 and 3-3 infantry. Every hex from 046 on north has a defense factor of six. This requires a large air effort (9 fac-

tors of ground support plus enough air to intercept any DAS) for the airborne to burst the second line. Nothing could be better. Russia's strategy in 1941 should be based on holding the line in the north at the expense of the south. Anything that is conducive to this strategy should be exploited.

Behind the second line are the five armor units. They are there to contain that one airborne-assisted exploitation to be faced each turn. There is one weak spot in the placement of the armor, and that is in the far south. If Germany sets up its airborne to reach either of the two vulnerable hexes (R38 and S38) then the armor can be shifted to compensate.

Two 2-3 infantry are placed in Leningrad, and the fleet is based first in Parnu. The air units are based in Vitebsk, Talinn, and Smolensk. Again, the placement of the air is made to defend the northern section of the front.

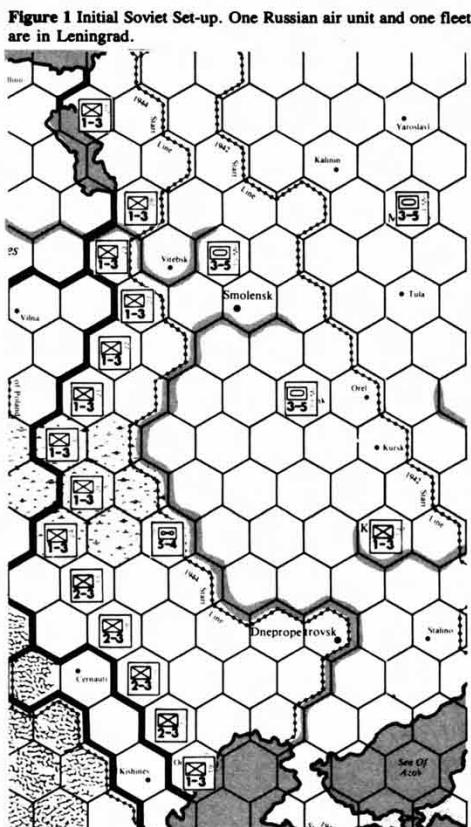
The overall strategy for 1941 must emphasize an organized retreat that preserves a strong defense in the north. The north has to be defended strongly because everything of importance is located there. Moscow, Vologda, and the Baltic States are all in the north. The most important hex in all of Russia, Leningrad, is also in the north. We will explore Leningrad's true importance in a moment. What it amounts to is that Russia can retreat only to the Moscow area in the north but as far as Astrakhan in the south. If she retreats any further than this, her chances of winning decline dramatically.

Let's take a look at why Leningrad is so very important. Leningrad in the hands of the Soviets serves many purposes. It is the only safe port for the Baltic Fleet. It is a fortress, and hence Russia can build inside of it even when it is completely surrounded. It is a base from which to strike out at the German flank when the front advances past it. It is an objective hex. It is one of the two receiving cities for the Murmansk convoys. If Leningrad falls, Russia immediately loses 15 BRPs and Germany gains 15 every YSS. No other city is nearly so important. Moscow is a supply source and Russia loses 15 BRPs when it falls, but otherwise it is not significant. Russia can afford to lose Moscow but never Leningrad.

The Red Army's major concern lies in preventing any large fraction of itself from being surrounded. Units eliminated due to lack of supply cannot be rebuilt in the same turn, resulting in fewer units to man the front, resulting in even more surrounded units next turn . . . and so forth. This "snowball effect" can be prevented by keeping the number of surrounded units per turn to a minimum. If 37 or more factors die of starvation in one turn, then Russia will be forced to surrender in short order.

The economic situation in 1941 is bleak. Germany will begin the year with about 260 BRPs. Subtract 10% for strategic warfare and they are left with 234. Germany will also receive 45 BRPs for its minor allies in the summer, yielding a total of about 280. The Soviet Union should have about 125 BRPs from its base plus 25 BRPs from Baltic States. The BRPs from the Baltic States won't be around very long though. Economically, Russia is no match for Germany. This has great implications for overall strategy. First, it is impossible for Russia to hurt Germany by wearing down its army. Germany, if it wishes to, could rebuild its entire armor force almost three times over. Killing German units does not give Russia any benefit in economic terms. Rather, Russia must *keep* Germany from destroying large numbers of Red units, especially air and armor, since a war of attrition at this point spells doom for the Kremlin.

It is quite possible for Russia to limit her losses to about 30 BRPs per turn. This means that Russia will not need BRP grants from England in 1941. A deal with England that lets her keep her BRPs in 1941 in exchange for more BRPs in 1942 is something to consider obtaining. This would ensure Rus-



sia's economic needs later in the war. It might also encourage England to be aggressive if she chooses to in the Mediterranean.

## Spring 1941

The first German attack will probably consist of a few two-hex penetrations by armor, plus one airborne-assisted one. A typical first turn attack is shown in Figure 3. Germany has attacked all along the front, but with armor in only three locations. One attack in the South drove in the direction of Dnepropetrovsk and the Crimea with three armored units. The second attack was made right through the heart of the Pripet Marshes with another three. Both of these attacks advanced two hexes deep. Both of these penetrations can be readily dealt with during Russia's turn.

The major armored attack occurs in the North, as was expected. Even though five armor and the airborne unit were used, the Wehrmacht only managed to push to Minsk! Every single German infantry also attacked. They destroyed nine of the thirteen 1-3 infantry that made up the front line. The

armor destroyed two 2-3 and one 3-3 infantry plus a 3-5 armor unit. One 3-3 and two 1-3 infantry units were put out of supply. All of this at a cost of two infantry units.

Russia is now faced with a maximum loss of 26 BRPs. If Russia can maintain this rate, then she will be in great shape. The Soviet Union now should clearly select the attrition option. Attrition does not cost any BRPs. Furthermore, it is far easier for Russia to push back German armor by attrition than by combat. The Red Army should fall back slowly, especially in the north, to form a new defense line. Because one can't build in a ZOC, the German armor must be sealed off by movement. The air force should pull back any units that are now within German counterair range.

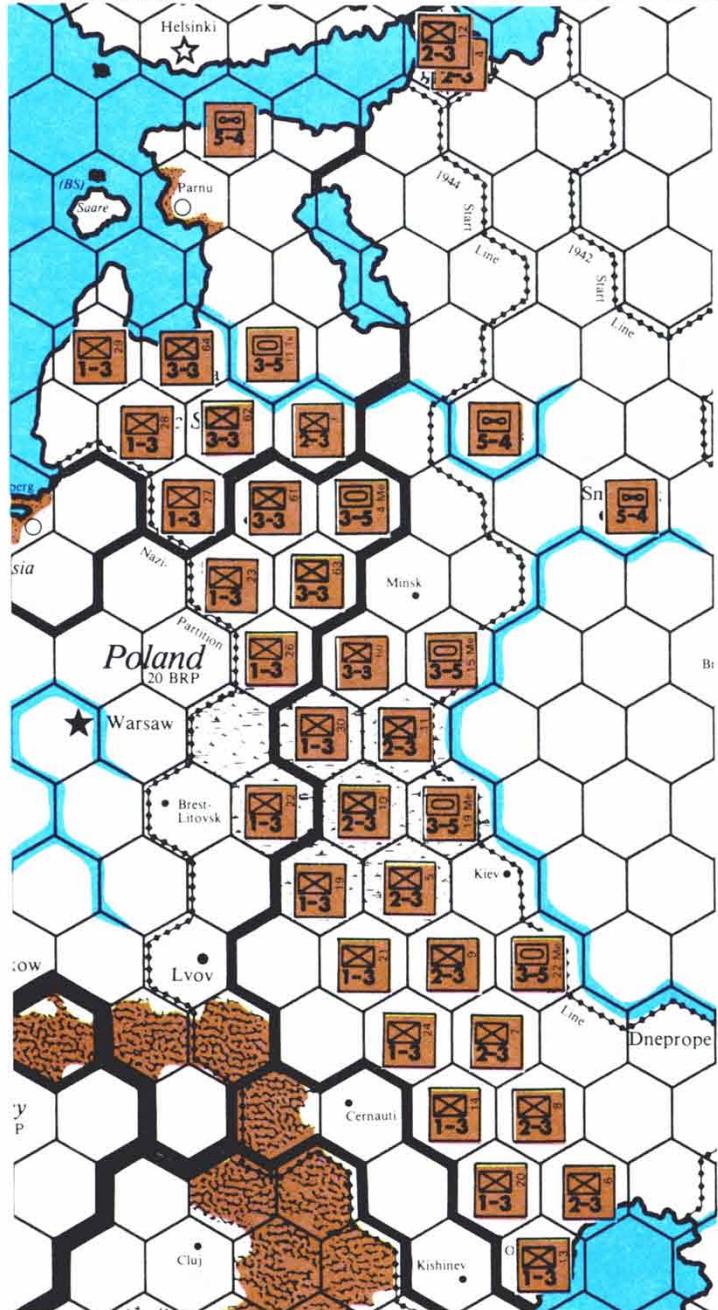
In Figure 4, we see a reasonable Soviet response to what Germany has done. A new front line has been formed running basically in front of the Dvina and Dnieper. Units rebuilt at the end of the turn will form the second line of defense directly behind the first. Russia now takes a 31-40 point attrition. There is a 67% chance of gaining a hex. Hexes are all that matter; any corp losses come out as cheaply rebuilt replacements. Remember, it is more important to establish a solid defense than try to increase the at-

trition table a column. Attrition is fine, but on the long Russian front, one more hex or one more corp will usually not make much difference.

If Russia does gain a hex, the obvious one to take is Minsk. This is mainly because Minsk is the only airbase open to Germany in the north. One major factor in slowing up the German advance is denial of airbases. Cities that Russia retreats out of in its own turn can not be staged to by the Luftwaffe on Germany's next turn. The Russian player should keep careful track of those cities he has just retreated out of, and those that were previously captured. As has been stated so often, the key to 3R is airpower; so Russia must keep Germany from bringing the full power of the Luftwaffe to bear.

The airborne unit must be prevented from dropping next turn. There is one sure way to do this; put the airborne in a Russian ZOC. This will never be very difficult to accomplish, given that the airborne must land in the second row to be effective. In my example, either the armor near Riga or the one near Minsk could have done it. This move was not made because the airborne is not on a city, nor

**Figure 2** Soviet defensive line for the onslaught. This can be in place as early as Winter '39.



**Figure 3** Hypothetical Situation at the end German turn of Spring '41.

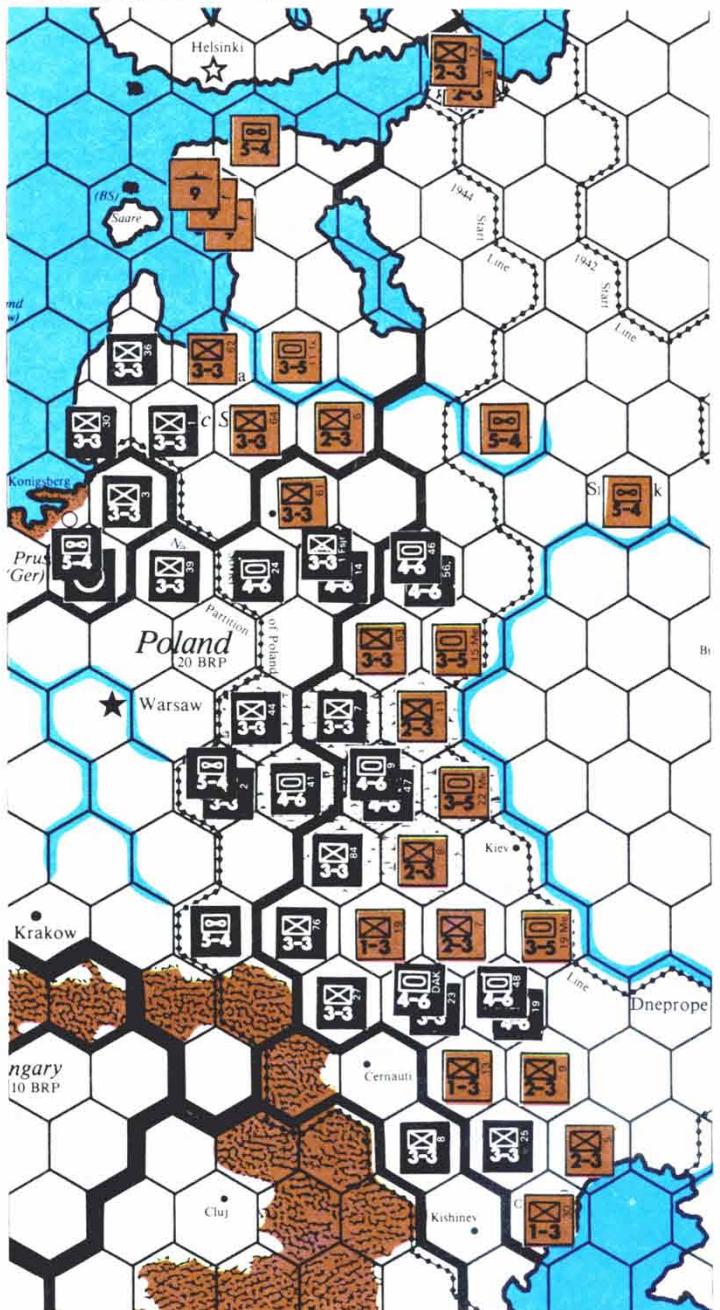




Figure 4 Hypothetical Situation at the end of Soviet turn of Spring '41.

was an airbase constructed underneath it. An airborne can jump if it doesn't begin its turn on a city or an airbase.

After the attrition is resolved, the Soviet player should build back his destroyed units and re-form a double line. After the first attack, there should still be enough units to form a complete double line.

## Summer 1941

The situation now looks pretty good for Russia. She has a double line of defense, she has momentarily neutralized the airborne, and she has only lost 26 BRPs. Germany, at best, can only advance two hexes during Summer 1941.

Germany's minor allies do enter the war in Summer 1941. Except for delivering 35 BRPs, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria are fairly insignificant. When playing Germany, I usually have the minors capture Yugoslavia through attrition. They don't play any part in Russia except for filling gaps in the front and absorbing attrition losses.

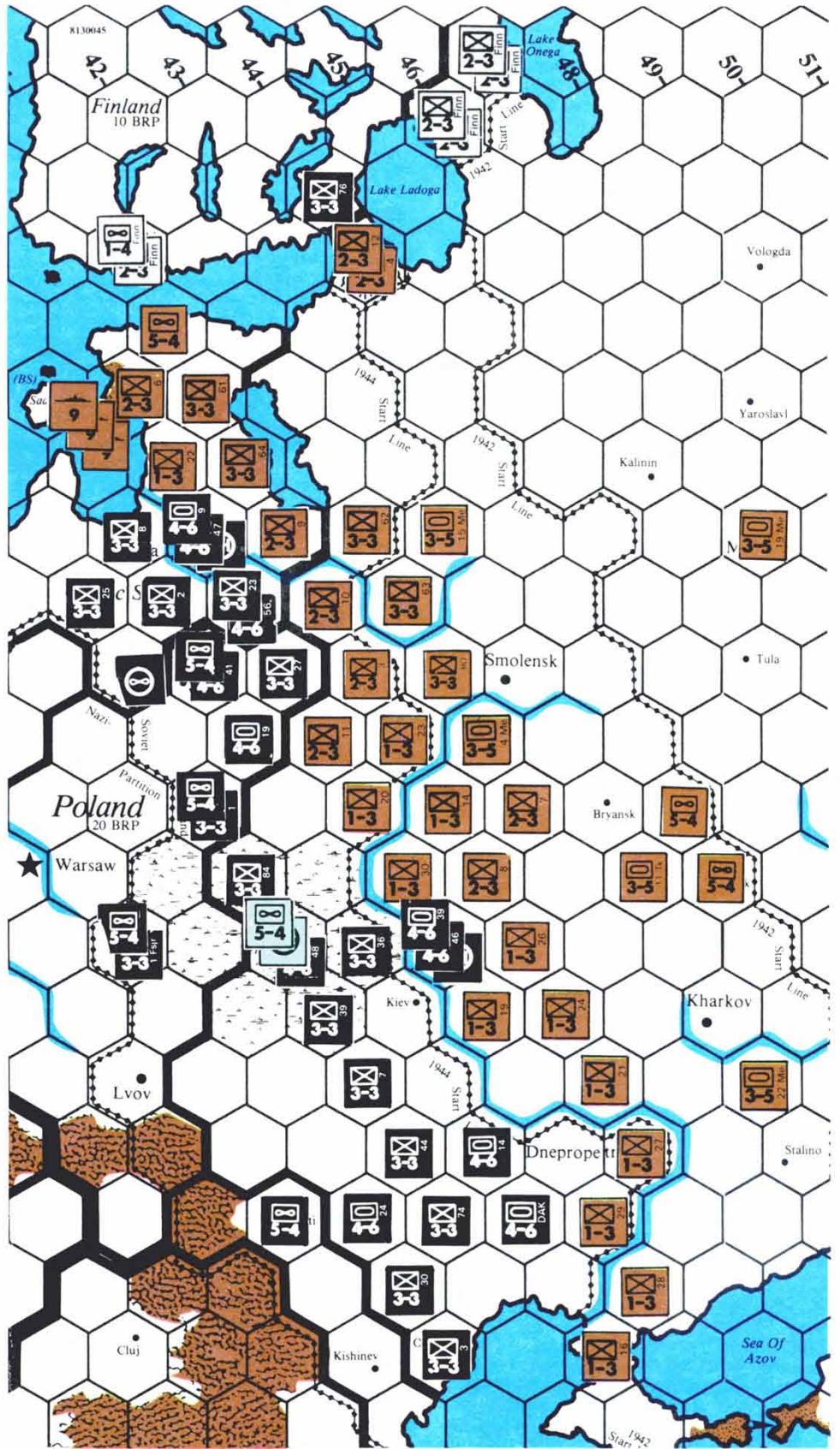
Finland is another matter. The Finns can stride to Leningrad, and they can hit the rear of the Russian front. Basically, they can be quite obnoxious. There is an easy way to handle the Finns, especially when dealing with an aggressive German. Russia must let the Finns sweep into the north through the undefended region between lakes Ladoga and Onega. On the immediately following Allied turn, Russia constructs partisans in B46 and B47. This seals the Finns out of supply. End of threat.

The same principles used in Spring '41 apply equally in Summer. Germany will make a lot of short stabs assisted by her overwhelming airpower. The airborne unit will be moved to a safe airbase so that it can drop in the autumn. After Germany completes her turn, Russia should again fall back and re-form. The problem is that, this time, the front has expanded beyond the capabilities of the Red Army to contain it. The army will not be able to form a double line, much less a third line with armor to contain the airborne. This is when a decision must be made. Is it better for Russia to solidify one section of the front at the expense of another? The alternative, spreading the available

resources evenly, leaves the entire front inadequate to handle the Germans. I would have a full defense in the north and a single line of infantry in the south. Armor and air should be placed in the south to bolster the infantry line. A good example of such a response is shown in Figure 5. This represents the situation at the end of Summer '41. The northern section is defended very heavily. There is a double line of infantry plus armor behind. Germany won't get far if it makes its big push in the north.

The southern section is a different story. There is only a single line of infantry. This is supplemented by two armor and two air units behind the line. Their job is to slow down the inevitable breakthrough. Germany could very easily drive as far east as N46. This is acceptable. After the Fall turn, Germany will be stopped by the Russian winter. 1941 will be over.

Figure 5 Hypothetical Situation at the end of Soviet turn of Summer '41. Notice the relative weakness of the Russian line in the south.



## Flip-Flop

Before I continue discussing the combat aspect of '41, there is another point I should bring up. Russia begins 1942 with around 150 BRPs. England will usually have about 120-150 BRPs. This gives an Allied total of approximately 280-300. Germany has about 250 to start the year plus 45 from minor allies. Add in 80 from Italy and the Axis have a total of about 375. Germany will have spent quite a few BRPs in 1941. She will declare war on Russia, take offensive options in the East and possibly the Med, and she will build the fleet. Russia and Britain on the other hand will be playing a very inexpensive delaying game. The possibility of a flip-flop becomes very evident. Should Russia accept the flip-flop, which would most likely occur in Fall-Winter? Absolutley not!! It would be a tremendous mistake. The danger in accepting the flip-flop lies in the fact that the Axis get the initiative back in Spring '42. An Axis double move in Winter-Spring would be devastating (not only on the Russian front). If one is faced with a flip-flop, there are many ways to get rid of the unwanted BRPs. Foreign Aid, Murmansk U-boats, intelligence, and British attacks in the Med, can all burn those unwanted BRPs.

## Fall 1941

Germany will launch her last offensive of the year this turn. As has been seen, the Wehrmacht will not get very far, except in the deep south. The Russian must make his Fall turn move with a deep awareness of the Russian Winter and its implications. The rule states, in brief, that Axis (non-Finnish) forces during the first Winter turn in Russia are not doubled on defense, and may not take the offensive option. This means that in the Fall '41 turn, Russia only needs to form a single line of defense, and can concentrate on achieving a high attrition total. An example of such a move is shown in Figure 6. This is the position at the end of the Russian Fall turn. Notice how much further Germany has advanced in the south than in the north.

Before continuing with consideration of Winter '41 there is another possibility to consider. Suppose Germany attacks earlier than Spring '41. This isn't too common, but it happens once in a while. If Russia is hit hard in Fall '40 or earlier, the blame lies with France and Britain. There is no excuse for France falling early enough to allow Germany to attack so soon. Russia will be hard-pressed to survive at all. If Russia is attacked in Winter 1940, then comes the true test of how good the Russian player really is.

Obviously, don't take the Russian Winter in 1940. The Russian Winter is a device that pulls Russia's bottom out of the fire; in 1940, the coals haven't even been warmed. Using the same strategy I have previously outlined, Russia can get through Summer '41 in reasonable condition. Now though, there is no Winter to stop the Wehrmacht; a very devastating Fall turn looms ahead.

This is where the skill of the Russian player is crucial. There are two basic strategies that can be used to handle this situation. The first is the same old retreat and re-form. It tries to hold the north and give up the south again. Unfortunately, this usually won't work very well. The front has become too long for the available Red units to hold it. Germany should be able to make a major encirclement in either the southern or central regions. The panzers could also break through in the center and drive north into the rear of the Red Army. This is NOT a good position for Russia to be in. I can't speak very concretely about what will happen since so much depends on the particular situation and the goals of the German player. In short, this is a passive rather than active solution to the problem.

The other solution is to counterattack against the main pocket of German armor in the North. Because

of the nature of the combat system in 3R, the Wehrmacht will break up its armor into two or three major attack groups. If Germany has only two armor units working together as a breakthrough and exploitation team, they won't get very far. Mass (i.e., three to five units) armor is necessary to make big gains. This results in "pockets" that are ripe for counterattack.

Some readers are now thinking, "The Germans won't let themselves be put into a position vulnerable to counterattack," or, "How can Russia mount a counterattack against all that airpower Germany has?" Both of these arguments are invalid. Germany cannot avoid getting into a position vulnerable to attack. The Wehrmacht must be very bold and reckless with its armor to have a chance of winning. If they play conservatively, always waiting for the infantry and airbases to catch up, their advances will be reduced to a crawl. Germany will always have weak links in its line as soon as the front expands inside Russia. These weak links (i.e., minor units) can be the holes through which Zhukov attacks.

The second point seems like a more reasonable argument. On the face value, Russia can't possibly hope to mount a counterattack with so much German airpower available. Now is when a good knowledge of the rules helps out. It is very possible for a weaker air force to completely neutralize a much stronger enemy air force. I will show how this is done by giving an example from a game recently played:

Germany had dropped its airborne into London, garrisoned by a single 3-4 infantry. Another 3-4 infantry was in Plymouth and a 1-3 infantry was in Southampton. The Axis had 35 air factors within range of London (30 German and five Italian). England had twelve factors, all of which were out of counterair range. Germany added nine factors of ground support to the attack on London. England chose not to fly DAS so the combat odds were 2-1 (12-6). The Axis rolled a "5" eliminating the defender and occupying London. It looks pretty grim for the Allies now, right? Wrong!

Consider this. On the Allied turn, England moves the 3-4 infantry from Plymouth to Birmingham. The RAF contributes three factors of ground support leaving it with exactly nine uncommitted air factors. England now has a 1-1 (7-6) attack with an 83.3% chance of retaking London and permanently eliminating the airborne unit. The Luftwaffe has 26 factors of uncommitted air, but can only fly nine factors for DAS (3x basic strength of defender). These nine factors are intercepted and turned away by the remaining RAF factors. The 1-1 attack is allowed to go through right in the face of overwhelming German air superiority. It was an excellent move on Britain's part and would have been even better if he didn't roll a "5". The point is that Russia can circumvent superior German airpower by holding back its planes for an interception rather than direct ground support of counterair role. (I personally consider this tactic somewhat illegal. I suggest allowing the defender to fly additional air factors as "escorts" who could participate in air combat against interceptors, but wouldn't count for DAS.)

When I, as Russia, launch a counterattack, I always conduct it in the north, for three major reasons. First, as I have said many times, the north is intrinsically more important. If the German assault in the north can be stopped for a turn, it does more good than doing the same in the southern or central fronts.

Secondly, the northern armor pocket is usually larger in number of units and smaller in physical size than those in the south. A larger concentration of armor can usually be found in the triangle demarcated by Leningrad, Smolensk and Yaroslavl. In the southern part of the front, the armor is much more spaced and spread out. This means that the northern pocket is easier to surround.

Lastly, there are a couple of terrain features in the north that help do the job. The constricted nature of the Baltic States and the location of the Lake Peipus help to cut off alternate supply routes. Leningrad is in a good position to launch attacks at the German rear.

The goal of the counterattack is to isolate a large number of German armor units. Units that are out of supply cannot move and hence cannot advance. Armor units that exploited the previous turn are automatically in supply, but are not allowed to exploit this turn. Because these armor cannot exploit, they are no better than infantry; hence any advance will be limited to only one hex. If Russia can pull off this counterattack in Summer, then Germany will have to extricate its units in Fall. The next turn will be the Russian Winter and again Germany will be stopped.

An example of just such a counterattack is shown in Figure 7. If possible, exploiting Russian armor should try to destroy undefended airbases and put the airborne into a ZOC. Note that the airborne must jump from a supplied airbase out of enemy ZOC. The overriding concern should be the encirclement of the Nazi armor. Quite often, as was the case in my example, the construction of partisans can be the very key to completing the Kessel. It is in this mode that the partisans are most devastating.

## Winter 1941

Many 3R players feel that Winter '41 is a perfect time to counterattack. The Wehrmacht is not doubled on defense. Too, no German penetrations have to be dealt with this turn. I think this is the wrong analysis. There are many factors working against any successful major counterattack.

For one, the Wehrmacht player knows his units are not doubled on defense, and will take reasonable countermeasures. He will probably double up units, and space armor behind the line to prevent a large breakthrough. In the German winter turn, Germany will be concentrating on a reasonable defense rather than offense. This will prevent her from being caught seriously off-balance. Another problem is that the German armor has not made deep penetrations in Winter. This will allow the lagging infantry to catch up with the panzers and solidify the front. The last major problem is that Germany did not, of course, need to use any airpower in Winter. A much larger number of air factors will be available for DAS. This preponderance of airpower can be nullified in one or two locations by the strategy outlined earlier, but a major offensive can never be made in the face of it.

I look at the Russian Winter as a time for the Red Army to take a breather. It can rebuild all the units surrounded in Fall. It can re-form a solid defense. It is not yet the time to launch a major counteroffensive.

## 1942

At the beginning of 1942, Russia will be in one of two positions. The first, is one in which Russia is strong both militarily and economically. She will be defending a line that stretches from Leningrad to Tula and then southeast to the Don bend and on to Rostov. Russia will be in control of Leningrad and will probably be engaged in a fight for Moscow. This is what I call the "Victory Line". From this position, Russia will probably win a tactical or strategic victory in the multi-player game, and at least a marginal victory in the two-player game.

The alternative position is the full rout. This probably came about because Germany attacked in Summer or Fall 1940. The Red Army will be in full retreat all along the front. If Russia is in a two-player game, then she should play for the draw. In a multi-player game, the Russian player should at least try to avoid surrender. There is probably no way a German strategic victory can be avoided in this case.

Before I discuss appropriate strategy for both situations, I want to conclude my general overview of 1942.

Economically, Russia will need a lot of BRPs from the West. Indeed, 89 BRP equivalents in new force pool units need to be built. There will also be a continuous flow of destroyed units that need to be rebuilt (approximately 15-30 BRPs per turn). Russia will certainly take one and maybe two offensive options in 1942. Russia begins the year with only 125-135 BRPs; this obviously won't meet all the Soviet needs.

## Spring 1942

Let's examine the "Victory Line" situation in 1942. With the Winter calm, Russia has had a chance to rebuild her defense. Again, the strength should be in the north. The German attack in Spring '42 will crawl forward in the north, but in all likelihood, should burst across the Steppes and into the Caucasus. After this happens, Russia has two priorities: 1) Russia must not let Germany outflank her northern front. Germany has to be prevented from driving north in the direction of Gorki. 2) Russia must not try to hold Germany in the Caucasus. It would be too easy for the panzers to drive toward Astrakhan and seal off a large number of Russian units. If the Don river line has completely collapsed, the Red Army should re-form along the Volga.

Russia's Spring '42 turn is a perfect time to launch a counterattack in the same manner as was suggested earlier for Summer '41. If this counterattack against Army Group North is successful, then by the time the German recovers (Fall '42), the Red Army will be in much better shape.

Russia should realize that the German offensive will continue well into '42. Maybe even until fall of that year. By that time, Russia will have built enough of her new force pool to put a halt to Barbarossa. But how far can Germany be allowed to advance in '42 before there is too much ground to be made up? I draw the maximum advance line, give or take a few hexes, like this: it starts at Lake Onega in the north, goes down to Moscow, across to Kuibyshev, then down the Volga and on to the Caspian Sea. The Wehrmacht cannot be allowed to make a *consolidated* advance across this line if Russia hopes to win. It is very important that the German army does not ever reach the east edge of the mapboard or Russia is in serious trouble.

In the build phase of Spring of '42, Russia must decide whether or not to use the Free Siberian Transfer rule (if she didn't do so in Winter). I was initially against using this rule in all but the most desperate situations since it increases the victory conditions. Since then, I have heard a very convincing argument for using this rule. The argument ran like this, "Very few 3R games are played to completion—all the way to 1945. They usually end in concession. Hence, there is very little need to worry about how tough the victory conditions have become. Just the fact that it looks like the Allies will take Berlin—eventually—counts." How can I argue with that? Of course, if you are planning to play a complete game, then use of this rule should be restricted to those cases in which it is absolutely necessary.

In 1942, Russia's force pool expands tremendously. Fifteen Guards infantry, four good armor (the introduction of the T-34), and two airborne units are added. Russia should build the infantry first, and maybe one or two armor if needed. Two tank units can be brought on through Free Siberian Transfer in Spring and Summer. The airborne are expensive, and really won't be needed until Russia goes on to the offensive.

By the end of Summer '42, the Axis should be at or near their high water mark. Russia should have a continuous double line, and armor behind the area

the airborne can hit. An example of this situation is shown in Figure 8. This exact situation will probably never occur in your games, but it gives an idea of what Russia should be aiming for in '42.

## Turning The Tide

The Red Army now goes over to the offensive—no later than Winter '42, and maybe as early as Fall. There are two reasons for why this will happen: 1) by late '42, Russia will have had time to build up its additional force pool; 2) the front will have expanded to such a long line that Germany can't possibly defend it all either.

How Russia will go about driving the Nazis back to Berlin is far too complicated to discuss here. I will satisfy myself by mentioning a few tips that are helpful in crushing the Wehrmacht.

Germany will quickly realize that it can't defend a line that stretches from Finland to the Caspian. The Wehrmacht will probably fall back to a line that resembles the '42 start line. If it doesn't, then a Russian drive from Moscow toward Rostov will make a lot of priests out of the Sixth Army. When Germany forms a solid line in Russia, the Red Army shouldn't try to push the whole thing backward. It is more productive to hit either end (or both) and

try to turn the corner. Both the physical layout of the Baltic States and the Crimea is conducive to this strategy.

The airborne units can be used as harassment. Dropping them on Helsinki or Bucharest is an excellent move. If based in Poland (obviously later in the war) or the Baltic States, they can drop on Stettin or Rostock, or even on Berlin. Russia should always keep her eyes open for airborne possibilities. Don't get too carried away though, because Russian airborne can be permanently eliminated also. Flanking invasions by the fleet, especially if the Kriegsmarine is tied up with England and America, can be helpful. A landing on K30, with three armor units, will capture Copenhagen and Kiel. This would allow Western Allied forces to SR into North Germany.

One point to remember, always maintain a double line of defense, even in '44 and '45. Germany is very capable of a crippling counterattack that can really throw a wrench into the Russian drive. This is exactly what happened in the last 3R series replay (Vol. 17 No. 6) printed in these pages. As the game winds down, it is important to keep victory conditions firmly in mind. In the multi-player game, it is objective hexes that count, not who captures Berlin.

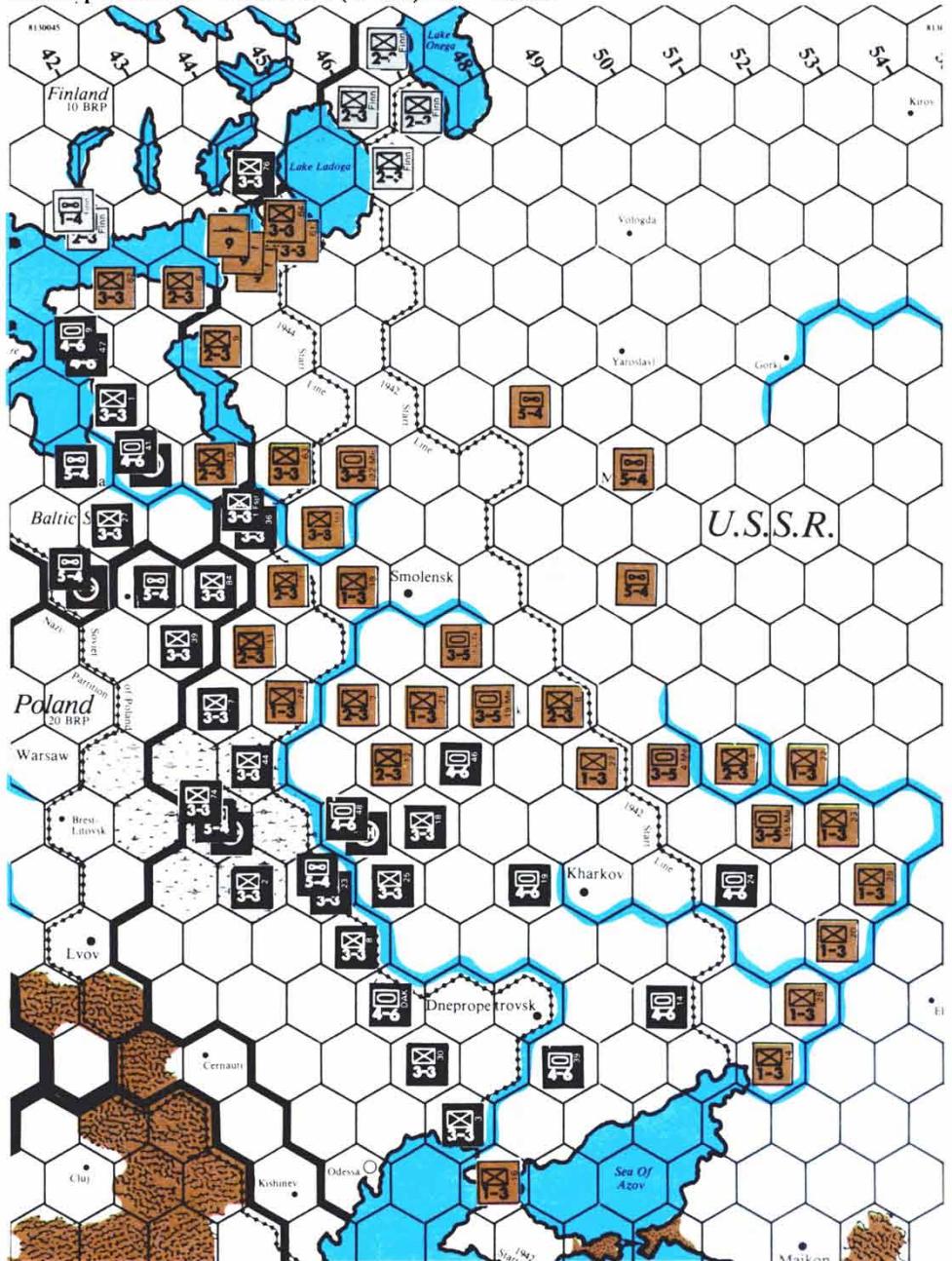


Figure 6 Hypothetical Situation at the end of Soviet turn of Fall '41.



**Figure 7** Soviet counterattack against German Army Group North in Fall '41. The Soviet air unit in Kalinin must break down into 3-4 and 2-4 counters. Exploiting armor moves to hexes J43 and J41. Partisans are created in the shaded hexes.

### Full Retreat Scenario

Now let's return to the alternative '42 position. Russia has been routed. How can the Soviet Union stabilize the front and avoid being forced to surrender? One way for the Red Army to get a respite is to retreat and rebuild their new line at least five hexes away from the forward German infantry. This will prevent the Volksgrenadiers from assisting in any attacks in the next turn. The Wehrmacht will have to attack with unsupported armor. This will be somewhat easier to handle than the entire German army.

But this will not stop the Wehrmacht for long. The Red Army should ease back into the area south of 059 and the north end of the Caspian. The Russian player must fashion a three- or four-row deep defensive line and force the German to dig him out. The lack of cities in the area will curtail the availability of the Luftwaffe.

In the multi-player game, it is now next to impossible to prevent a German strategic victory. In a two-player game though, Germany must have 28 objective hexes at the end of Winter '43 to win. This is assuming Russia does not surrender, in which case Germany wins anyway. At first, it looks like it would be hard to prevent Germany from having 28 objectives hexes. The Allied player must resort to a devious little trick. In the Winter '43, Allied construction phase, Russia should build a single partisan on each of three objective hexes inside Russia. Nine times out of ten, the German will not have garrisoned these hexes, and so the Allies will have snatched a draw from the jaws of defeat.

In the two-player game, the Allied player should realize that it is impossible for him to take Berlin while the Russians are fighting by the Caspian. England and America should concentrate on sending BRPs to Russia so she remains strong enough to hold out. Opening a second front will also help by drawing off German air and armor units. The West should clean up the Mediterranean, and defend Tabroz and Sarab (if they fall, the Persia pipeline will be cut).

### Turkish Gambit

Earlier, I expressed my opposition to an attack on Turkey in '39, but I didn't explain why. The simplistic reason most Russian players attack Turkey is to gain BRPs (some attack out of boredom). I have shown that Russia doesn't need any additional BRPs in '41. She needs them in '42, and I find it highly unlikely that Turkey will belong to Russia in 1942. Just on economic grounds, the attack is not essential. Even worse, the defense of Turkey drastically weakens the defense of the Motherland. Russia will not be able to form a double line of defense until 1942, which will be much too late. I liken an attack on Turkey to self-mutilation.

### Conclusion

In this article, I have tried to outline the principles that a successful Russian player uses. In 1941, which is the year that decides the war, Russia should avoid challenging the German army. Never let the Wehrmacht surround large numbers of units. If you can do even this, you have played Russia well. Germany's real chances of winning come from inflicting tremendous losses every turn (in terms of BRPs). Don't help the Nazis in their attempt to do this. The way to win is not launching suicide counterattacks and throwing in your airpower for DAS at every opportunity.

This does not mean that Russians must be conservative throughout the war. Innovative uses of armor, airborne, partisans, and naval units can be quite fun and quite unorthodox. There must be a balance though, and it is the very best 3R players that achieve this balance.



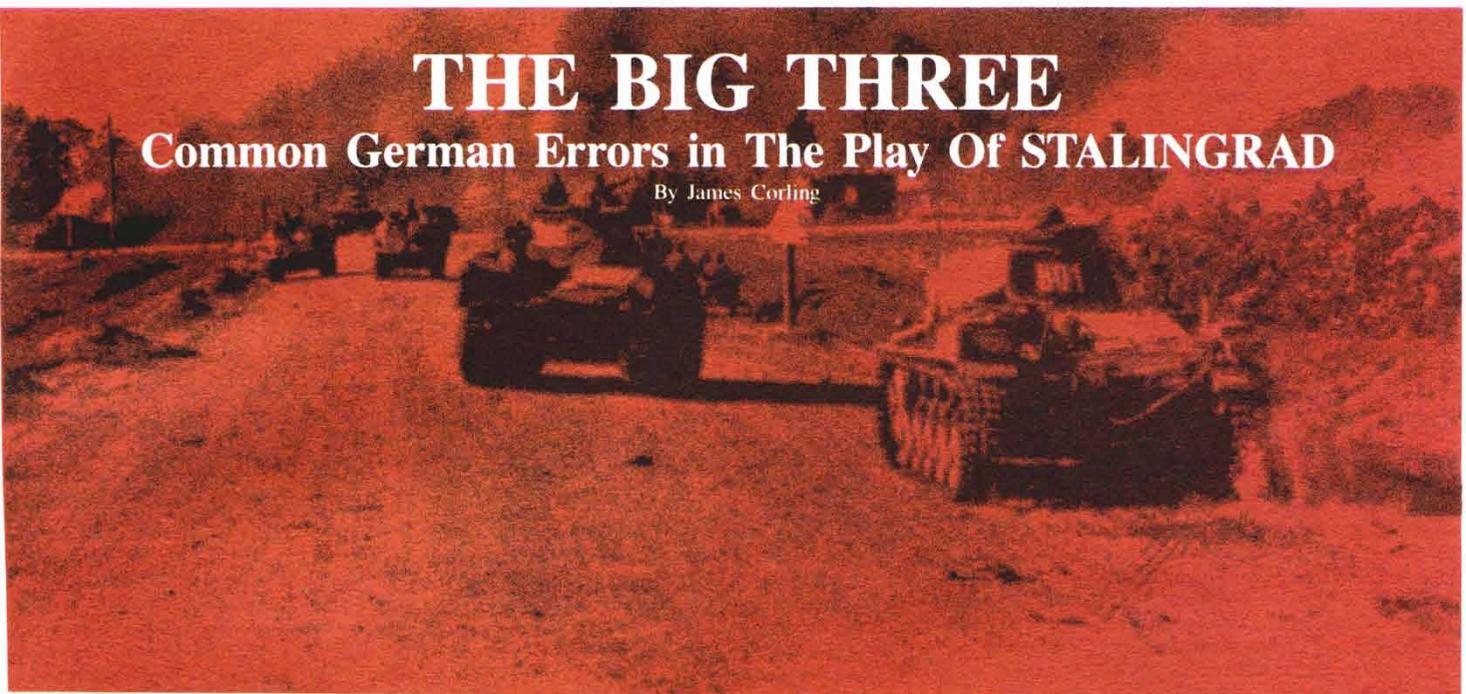
**Figure 8** Hypothetical Situation at the end of Summer '42 when Russia's defensive line has solidified.



# THE BIG THREE

## Common German Errors in The Play Of STALINGRAD

By James Corling



*It is rare that an article on one of the "AH classics" comes across our desk. Yet I still find that, should I wish to play a game with a new-found wargaming friend, we usually turn to STALINGRAD, AFRIKA KORPS, D-DAY or WATERLOO initially. It is a dicotomy that I cannot explain.*

Whenever I play a game of *STALINGRAD*, I always try to learn something from it that will improve my play. I generally watch for two things. I look for a better way to do something, which I often find by watching what my opponent does. Secondly, I try to pay attention to mistakes made both by myself and by my opponent, so that I can avoid repeating those mistakes in future games.

Having played *STALINGRAD* more than 100 times, I have noticed that the German player more often than not commits at least one of three common strategic mistakes. I call these mistakes "The Big Three". Often the German player makes many more "risky" attacks than are necessary, and suffers needless losses. I define a "risky" attack as one that is made at less than 3-1 odds (especially against a doubled position), and is not a "soak-off". Or the German player fails to do everything he can to hold out in Finland for as long as possible. Or the German player is guilty of what I call "strategic misdirection" (this mistake usually occurs in the "middle" game, the Spring and Summer 1942 campaign). In this article, my intention is to discuss the general strategic situation during different phases of the game. By doing this, I hope to explain why those mistakes are so often committed, how these can be avoided, and how this fits into the overall game situation.

The German player commences the game with an impressive looking army. Despite that, progress against a competent Russian opponent is usually made slowly in the opening stages. The reason for this is that the Russian situation at the beginning of the game is better. Let's take a look at some of the things the Russian player has going for him as the game begins. First of all, the Russian player starts with his entire army on the board. After the German player makes his first attack, never again during the course of the game should the Russians be able to field every one of their units. Secondly, the Russian player begins the game with a relatively short front to defend; even with units in Finland, he has many more units defending a shorter front

than he should ever have in any other stage of the game. Last, but not least, the area near the Russian border offers an abundance of doubling terrain. The Russians have mountains, cities, and river lines to defend in (or behind) to a depth that will not be encountered again after they are forced to withdraw deeper into Russia. Although not doubling terrain, the marshes are famous for the part they play in the Russian defense.

The German player need not despair, however. Provided that the German plays competently during the first few turns, the situation for the Russian player can be expected to soon worsen. This turn of events will be caused mainly by factors designed into the game, not necessarily by a lapse into bad play by the Russian commander.

First of all, the Russian player does not begin to receive replacements until his fourth (September) turn; therefore the German player has four turns to inflict losses before the Russian player can begin to replace them. This means that the Russian player will have fewer and fewer units to hold the same, or longer, frontage. This is the German's best chance to rupture the front and make significant gains. As the Russian forces retire deeper and deeper into the interior, they will generally have to defend more open terrain. Once the Soviets have been pushed back beyond the Dnepr River, they will no longer be able to depend on the Pripyet Marshes as part of their defense. Thus, the Russian line will become longer and more difficult to defend.

The onset of winter will only add to the Russian player's problems. Although it's true that snow will impair the German mobility, the Russian player's mobility will be hurt even worse. The Russian front will still be distant from his replacement cities, making it difficult or impossible to get those 2-3-6 delaying units (or any other units) into position each turn particularly in the south. His low unit count (relative to the German forces) can make it very difficult for the Russian player to defend as efficiently as he would like. He will find it hard to shift his units about from one position to another.

The Russian player does have a couple of things in his favor to partially offset those problems. By now, the German forces will probably have been weakened to some degree due to occasional low-odds attacks, exchanges, and soak-offs. And, the Russian forces in Finland can be expected to complete their campaign and move toward the main front by the time winter has begun.

The best way for the German player to further his goals is to minimize those factors (mentioned above) that work in the Russian player's favor. The German player can do this by minimizing his losses and by keeping the Russians occupied in Finland for as long as possible. Let's examine these two objectives closely, one at a time.

The first objective is that of keeping German losses to a minimum during the opening stage of the game. As mentioned earlier, one of the most common mistakes made by the German player is to attack at low odds much more often than is absolutely necessary, thus incurring needless losses. I believe that there are two main motivations behind this mistaken tendency on the part of many German players. First, because it is so difficult to make progress at the beginning of the game, I believe that many German players fear they will run out of time before they can accomplish their victory conditions. Secondly, German commanders are usually anxious to attrite the Russian army before his replacements begin to arrive.

The notion that the German player will run out of time unless he makes numerous risky attacks is false. However, as is the case with many groundless fears, this notion does contain an ounce of truth. In the game *STALINGRAD*, the German player cannot afford to simply sit back and take what the Russian player gives him. In order to maintain the momentum of his advance, especially in the opening stage of the game, the German player must take *some* risks. This does not mean, however, that the Germans should attack everything in sight!

A low-odds attack that is properly executed will risk a minimum of losses and have a good chance of capturing its objective. Such an attack could, for example, be made to break a Russian river line defense and force the defenders into open terrain where they can be attacked at favorable odds. But, in the final analysis, there are only a few instances where such low-odds attacks are feasible or useful. At this point, I feel that it might be appropriate to give an example of what I consider to be a "properly executed low-odds attack". After the Russian player has set up his opening defense, the German player should examine the entire front before placing his units on the board. However, for purposes of keeping the example simple, I will consider only a small portion of one possible Russian set up. This will be the sector in the area of the Nemunas River (as shown in Diagram #1).

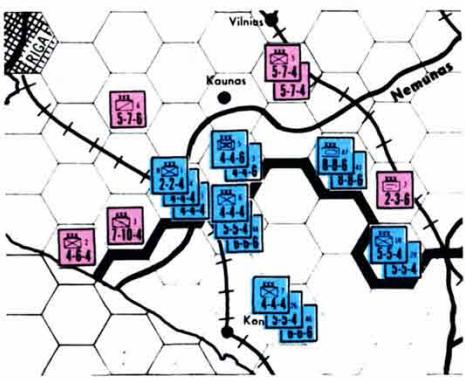


Diagram #1 Cracking the Nemanus Line.

Given the defense shown, there are four possible positions along the Nemanus River that the German player can attack. Of course, the 2-3-6 delaying unit will be "AVed". If the German player declines to make any risky attacks against the "Nemanus defensive line", it will require four turns to outflank the Nemanus by advancing into the marsh at the south end of the river. I don't believe that any German player can passively allow the Russian player to "bottle up" his forces that long. The German player must try to break this line at some point and force the Russian defenders into the open.

My solution would be to attack the 7-10-4 unit at 1-2 odds from hex T18. This attack would risk ten factors and have a 33% chance of destroying (in an Exchange) or pinning the 7-10-4 unit. With the 7-10-4 unit out of the way, the "Nemanus defense" at that point will either be broken immediately (by advancing due to a D-back result), or soon after. If the 7-10-4 is lost in an Exchange, it will not be possible for the Russian player to "3-1 proof" the river at that point (unless the other 7-10-4 can reach S18). This, then, is an example of an attack that risks relatively few losses and yet has a fair chance of accomplishing something significant. Of course, an attack such as this will often fail, but if attacks such as this are occasionally attempted at selected points, the Germans will succeed at times—bringing great gains in their wake.

[For a number of sound ideas on how to minimize German losses, the reader is referred to an excellent article in Vol. 13, No. 4 of The GENERAL entitled "Taking the Offensive in STALINGRAD".]

Now I would like to discuss the second objective mentioned above, which is aimed at keeping the Russians occupied in Finland for as long as possible. Many German commanders seem to be almost indifferent to the action going on in the Far North. The German player either considers it to be a relatively unimportant front, or he seems to feel that the Russian forces there are too powerful to be stopped anyway, so what the heck?

While it is probably true that the Russian forces in Finland are usually too powerful to be prevented from conquering it indefinitely, I believe that the Axis forces in Finland have a good chance of holding out for at least six months. My opening Axis defense of Finland is shown in Diagram #2. This defense allows the Russian player to "AV" a 2-2-4, but if he wants to "bag" any other Axis units he will be forced to risk lower odds attacks with possible Exchange, D-back 2, or other unfavorable results. This defense takes advantage of the fact that the Russian units are relatively weak in offensive power, though they are quite strong defensively. My defensive play is to retreat each turn just far enough to shorten my line a bit. Each turn I plan to offer only one easy kill, at most, while forcing the Russian player to take risks to eliminate any other units.

The rules allow the German player to send 8 factors worth of units to the aid of the Finns. Send a 5-5-4 and a 3-3-4. The 5-5-4 is the key unit. I almost always keep the 5-5-4 stacked with another unit the

first few turns. Because of that, the 5-5-4 is often one of the last surviving units in Finland. The Russians would try to kill it sooner if it were left alone in a hex. After the Axis forces have been "whittled down" to the point where the Russians are about to be through with them, I like to move the 5-5-4 into Helsinki and use other smaller Axis units to form a defensive "ring" in front of the city. It then takes the Russian player another two turns to "finish off the Finns". The Russian player's final attack in Finland is often a 3-1 surrounded against the 5-5-4 in Helsinki. The Russian player is forced to risk a 33% possibility of an expensive Exchange just to rid himself of the last Axis unit in Finland!

If the German player has managed to avoid excessive losses and has successfully delayed the Russians in Finland, his situation should be much improved by the time his 1941 winter campaign begins. The snow turns will impair the mobility of both players, but the German player's numerical superiority should give him the upper hand in this situation. To make the most of his advantage, the German player must plan ahead. Before the snow begins, the German player must decide where he will concentrate his forces and what his objectives will be. The German player should carefully study the terrain and the Russian player's defensive alignment and try to visualize, in general, how the game can be expected to develop. Has the Russian player concentrated his strength north or south of the marshes? What kind of doubling terrain will the Russian be able to utilize to slow the German advance and where? What is the best way to overcome the obstacle? Can these strong positions be bypassed or must they be attacked? How long will it take Russian replacements to reach the front line in each sector? These things must all be considered when the German player plans his winter offensive. It sounds difficult, but with experience these things can be considered and factored into the German plan fairly quickly. With good planning and a bit of luck, the German player can inflict losses and take much ground during the winter of '41/'42.

Most of the opponents I've met have done very well with the Germans during the first winter. It is during the second winter that most German players, including myself, have the greatest difficulties. The reason for this is the advantages of mobility for the most part now belong to the Russian player. Let's consider the general tactical situation during the second winter for a moment.

The situation during the second winter is almost the opposite of the situation that exists during the first winter. The Russian front is now closer to his replacement cities and he is usually fighting on interior lines. Even with reduced mobility, the Russian defense has great flexibility. On the other hand, the German forces are often spread all over the map. Additionally, the German army is somewhat depleted after almost a year and a half of fighting.

The seeds of a German defeat in the winter are usually sown during the 1942 summer campaign. It was mentioned earlier that some advanced planning was necessary in order to be successful during the first winter offensive. That is even more true for the second winter offensive. Many German players who could have won, lose instead because they failed to concentrate their forces in the right places during the good weather turns of 1942.

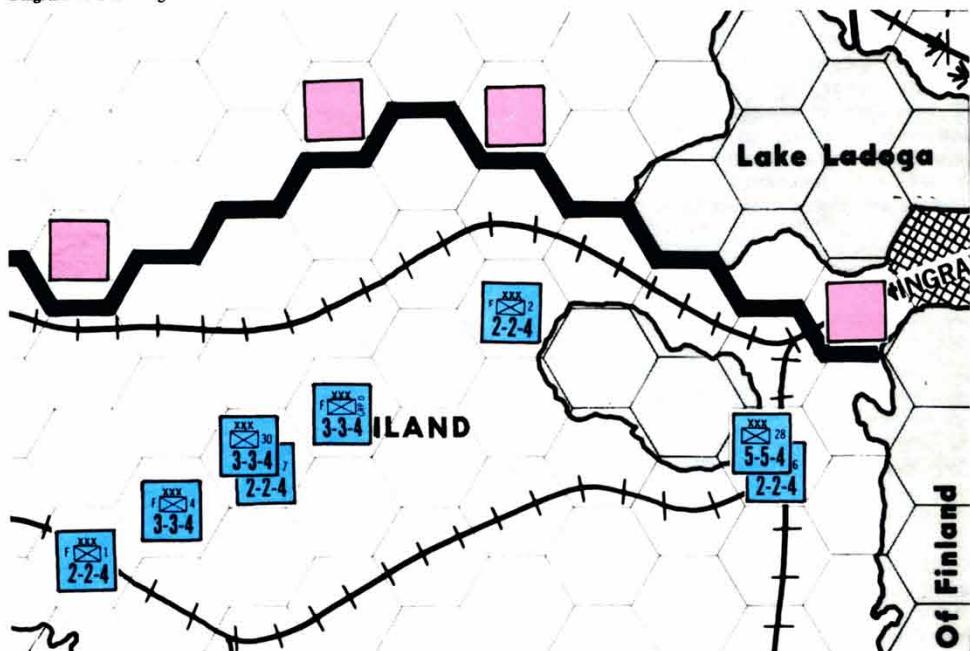
Often I have seen a situation similar to the following occur. Strong German forces close in on, and finally capture Leningrad and Moscow. Meanwhile, a handful of armored units with a few infantry units are beaten back by determined Russian counterattacks in front of Stalingrad. The German April 1943 turn finds six or seven (or fewer) German units within two hexes of Stalingrad. With a solid barrier of red units between them and the city, the game is lost. It is not uncommon for the German player to come that close and still lose. However, "overkill" against one objective at the expense of taking another objective is one of the leading causes of the German player losing in STALINGRAD. It is what I referred to earlier as "strategic misdirection".

The only way I know of to avoid that mistake is to plan well in advance how your objectives are to be best taken. One must keep firmly in mind the advantages that the Russians will enjoy during the second winter and prepare accordingly. Remember that even one Russian replacement city can generate two 2-3-6 armor corps every turn. Also remember that you will probably be attacking on exterior lines and will not easily be able to switch units from one sector to another. It is a fact that is often lost in that first flush of victory as the Red Army falls back in disarray.

These three errors, endlessly repeated by novices, can be avoided. When the day comes that you have played a flawless game of STALINGRAD as the German commander, then (to steal a phrase), "On that day, my son, you will be a WARGAMER."



Diagram #2 Defending Finland.



Dear Rex:

Just thought I'd waste a bit of your time with some ideas and stuff on our favorite game, *UP FRONT/BANZAI*.

First for the bad news. After continual playing, on our lunch hour, of every scenario, Ron Whaley and I think we have finally found an imbalance in one of the scenarios. I refer to "Scenario O", with the Japanese on the defense. It has been our normal method of defensive set-up for all these scenarios (and that of its sister, "Scenario C") to place the MMG in the pillbox to protect its firepower. This results in a typical set-up of either the rest or most of the rest of the troops in Group A or C.

However, if the Jap player sets up cards 5, 8 and 21 in the pillbox; 9 and 12 in a group; and the rest in a firebase, the following can happen. The largest group can be placed in either A or C, depending on how the attacker sets up his groups. This gives the following firepower factors at ranges 0-5: 6, 7, 14, 21, 22, 29—simply awesome at times. The two-man group simply runs away to prevent the US player from winning by eliminating 75% of the enemy. Alternatively, it may transfer one man to the pillbox at the same time as the pillbox sends one to the other group—a simple matter given the number of Jap movement cards. If the larger group gets favorable terrain early—such as woods (plus an entrenchment) or a good buildings card—they are nearly as invulnerable as the pillbox when you consider the -1 for the jungle effect. Given the large difference in number of movement cards and the defender's use of mines and snipers, this results in a large disadvantage for the US player.

Note that this is not apparent in the other match-ups of the scenarios since any other defender would lose by elimination of the large group (50%). Since the defender is able to react to the American set-up, he gets to place the large group in either A or C to suit his purposes. Group C is preferable. This leaves the attacker the necessity of charging through heavy fire and bad terrain to hope he can flank the defender—the only way to win. What we suggest to remedy all this is to allow the attacker to set-up second—after the Japanese. This is a small advantage seemingly, but we think it essential. Would be interested in other thoughts on this.

Jim Burnett  
Clinton, Tennessee

I usually place my machineguns outside the bunker when defending, regardless of nationality being played, so have seen how awesome the Japanese can be. I've faced them more than once, and won only through a rare combination of Wire, Gully, Marsh and Stream cards—pinning them while my own firegroup moved through the Gullies to optimum range. In any case, your suggested change seems the most elegant solution to the imbalance. I heartily recommend implementing it in all future playings of Scenario O.



Dear Sir:

Some of the older, established games are being neglected in The *GENERAL*. I realize you have to rely on material submitted, and surely the pattern is to publicize and introduce new games. OK. But some of us have 20+ Avalon Hill games, enjoy four or five, and only get time and opponents to play two or three. We'd like to see more articles on the best old ones, and a few could revive interest in the others. For example, *THIRD REICH*, one of your best (esp PBM) games hasn't had an article for ages, and the Emerald City game was stopped one-third of the way through. Surely you should finish what you've started at least.

I personally believe Avalon Hill has expanded well (if widely) but should consolidate before it spreads itself too thin and its reputation suffers. Getting back to the point, it shouldn't be hard to contact the known experts in the various games and ask them to write with an offer of suitable compensation. At present, the games I play are limited and I haven't even read one-half the rules of *COD*, let alone any of *GI* or *UP FRONT* (which I am now ordering). Help me feel less foolish (and compulsive) by following up these games with articles on strategy, series replays, even an open panel for reader suggestions, rule changes, and background information.

Now all that was meant to be constructive, and I hope you take it as such. Actually, your magazine is extremely welcome (even if two months late over here) and very valuable. As an example, in *JR* recently I was attacking Paris 2-1 across

## Letters to the Editor ...

the river with four panzer corps in exploitation and had intercepted intervening French air with four of my wings. The die roll modifiers led to a tie, so I lost my four and he had one air unit left. He then sought to add it to the Paris defenders to make the attack only 1-1. AHA!! I remembered a recent rule change and located it in a *GENERAL* Q&A section I photocopied to keep with the game. The attack on Paris went through at 2-1 and was a D-Elim (which would have been a A-Elim at 1-1 odds). The point of all this is that reading your magazine can and does help us become better gamers. I and many other happy gamers thank you all for making gaming so enjoyable. We hope that you will not forget those who have bought your games. We are counting on The *GENERAL* continuing to support these.

Chris Reeve  
Tewantin, Australia

*Mr. Reeve rather overstresses his point, but indeed we are dependent upon submissions to fill these pages. In point of fact I have solicited (even, perhaps, badgered?) articles on popular games from those "experts" I've met and have an appreciation of—Pruino Sinigaglio, Mark Nixon, Bob Beyma, Jim Burnett, McLaughlin, Medrow, Mishcon, as well as the game designers/developers in these hallowed halls themselves. This is especially true concerning the older games; even with a conscious effort to find suitable—even marginally acceptable—material, it is a struggle. These gentlemen have, as do we all, a limited amount of time to seize from the real world of their professions and families to devote to this hobby no matter how fascinating. A case in point, due to a serious illness and the family and professional disruption it entailed, Mr. Nightingale has yet to complete the next installment in his series on the *3R* game at the *ECC&GC* (last seen in Vol. 19, No. 2). I've never had any doubt but that The *GENERAL* is a welcomed and useful addition for the serious gamer. And there is much more that we would like to do within these pages. But, the realities of the situation impinge and we simply do the best we can.*



Dear Rex:

My compliments to the editorial staff of The *GENERAL* for the fine issue featuring *UP FRONT* (Vol. 21, No. 1). As a *SQUAD LEADER* enthusiast, I particularly enjoyed Patrick Callahan's "The Men Behind the Cardboard" and Mark Nixon's "Anvil of My Eye". The completion of Mr. Nixon's detailed analysis of the remaining scenarios from *G.I.* was well worth the wait. The article by Mr. Callahan reminds us all that we ought not "glory in war, but in those who went to war." The price paid by those who served in the conflicts simulated by our cardboard and paper was higher than we can imagine regardless of the realism of the rules.

I would like to correct one error that appears in Mr. Callahan's article. He refers to the 9th Division's attack on Aachen as "the bucket of blood". According to Cecil B. Curry's excellent volume on the battle of the Hurtgen Forest (*Follow Me and Die: The Destruction of an American Division in World War II*, 1984; Stein and Day), this title was actually applied to the 28th Division. As an activated National Guard Division from Pennsylvania, the 28th wore the red Keystone emblem for recognition. The German soldiers came to call the division the *blutiger eimer* ("bloody bucket"), not only for the patch worn but also for the intensity with which the GIs fought.

To underscore Mr. Callahan's attempt to put "flesh and blood" in our cardboard counters, several statistics should be cited. The sister regiment to the 112th, the 109th suffered a casualty rate exceeding 50% in its attack on Germeter. Of the 109th's staff officers, only one remained fit for duty following the battle from the 1st Battalion. Easy Company of the 2nd Battalion reported only four officers and 47 men available; this from a normal complement of 193 men and officers!

Theodore Bleck  
Canandaigua, New York



To the Editor,

As you may know, the Soviet leadership made it a point to downplay our remembrance of D-Day. According to them, our role in the war had no bearing on the outcome on the Russian Front. In response, I would like to suggest a variant for *THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*. This variant would reflect a 100% German effort against the Russians, untroubled by the threat of another front. I would also hope such a variant would take into account the absence of strategic bombing of the heavy German industry. Then let us in this hobby explore how the outcome on the Russian Front would have been affected had the West not brought about the greatest invasion in history.

I believe such a variant would create great interest among the readership of The *GENERAL*, if not among the Soviets.

Robert Peddie  
Wickliffe, Kentucky

*That's one of the things I so like about this hobby. It provides a scholarly and relaxing manner of exploring the fascinating "what if" byways of history without mere rhetoric taking over.*



Mr. Martin:

Enclosed in this envelope is a scenario of my own design to be used with the *SQUAD LEADER* system. I believe it to be both well-balanced and of a high degree of playability, two factors which I think are very important in a wargame. I have sent it to be considered for printing in a forthcoming issue of your magazine, *The GENERAL*. If you do print it, I would appreciate notification stating so; and if you don't, I have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope for its return. Thank you for your attention.

Tony Arnett  
Yellow Springs, Ohio

*I have printed Mr. Arnett's submission letter not because it is unique, but because we receive a dozen similar in content each week. Literally hundreds of SL scenarios pour through our offices yearly. But I wished to use his letter as a vehicle to inform would-be authors to delay further scenario submissions. Once ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER has been released at ORIGINS, all further scenarios printed in these pages must conform to the rules and systems of that game. The new maps, new counters, new scenario format, and many new rules will be standard. Since that is the case, I've more than enough material to handle the requirements over the next few issues. All others are being returned to their authors, with a request that they await the release of ASL and rework the scenario for submission following that auspicious date. To avoid unnecessary expense, readers hoping to submit scenarios are advised to await release of ASL. At that point, we'll again be more than glad to review all scenario submissions.*



Dear Mr. Martin:

I recently received a copy of *FREDERICK THE GREAT* as a gift. I was so pleased with the game that I proudly showed it to my neighbor, a German Army officer. He was quite interested, but very surprised at the subtitle: "The Campaigns of the Soldier-King". He told me that it was the father of Frederick the Great, Frederick William II, who was known as the Soldier-King, not Frederick himself. I have checked and my neighbor is correct. My faith in Avalon Hill has been shaken!

John Pitzer  
McLean, Virginia

*In Fuller's Military History of the Western World, Frederick the Great is indeed awarded the sobriquet "The Soldier-King". However, a number of works (such as Frederick the Great's Army by Seaton and The Army of Frederick the Great by Duffy) make no such reference to Frederick Wilhelm, grandson of the Great Elector and King of Prussia (1713-1740), nor to his famous son either. I suspect that, given Frederick Wilhelm's personality and interests, the term*

*does indeed apply to him but can find no corroboration. In any case, such colorful—if less than accurate—subtitles appear on many games in this hobby. No reason for your faith to be shaken, since the matter seems open to debate even among the experts. Indeed, I would believe that the Kings of Prussia so named could have cared less over what they were to be later called.*



Dear Mr. Martin:

One thing that got me mad in the last *GENERAL* (Vol. 21, No. 1) was a letter stating that the quality of the magazine had gone down in recent issues and complaining about the articles available. If they don't like, that's just too damn bad. Rather than offer suggestions, or contribute to the article mix, they simply complain and demand. And threaten. They reflect that attitude so prevalent in the hobby these days. Let them cancel their subscriptions.

Mike Hagen  
Santa Rosa, California



Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for your letter of 25 October; returned herein is the signed undertaking form as requested.

I note what you say concerning the popularity of *FLATTOP* (or rather, lack of it) and it is rather surprising that a game which stood in your top ten rankings only some two years ago should have its appeal fade so quickly. I believe the two main reasons for this are: 1) there are only four scenarios provided for the game; and 2) it has an extremely large mapboard which, with its associated charts, requires a very large area (at least by British standards) to set it up. *FLATTOP* suffers by comparison with, say, *SQUAD LEADER* in today's "instant" wargaming society. Games such as *SL* and its gamettes provide a tremendous variety of scenarios, ensuring that players are not constantly re-fighting old battles; and they can be played in a relatively small playing area with immediate "action" ensuing.

However, fashions and fads are constantly changing and changing and I am sure it is just a matter of time before gamers will want a break from *SL* and what-all. Then they will be looking around for old favorites to play. I'm convinced that *FLATTOP* is still the most "intense" and realistic game that I've played, and that its time will come again. If you agree with all this, then it might be that by publishing scenarios on games such as *FLATTOP*, you could be moving some way towards assisting in the "renaissance" of wargaming.

David Payne  
Burgess Hill, Great Britain

*Do not be misled by any game's appearance on our "So That's What You've Been Playing" listing. Wargaming, like so many other pursuits these days, seems to have entered a cycle of "fads"; new games which may be greatly played for awhile go to the shelf within a couple of months in favor of the newest magazine game or fantasy adventure module. This is true of even the best and most innovative releases, ones that will demand years of play before one can claim competency in competition. Long before these are understood (and perhaps their unique qualities contribute to the gamer turning to the more familiar concepts, simply dressed in new colors), the game disappears from our listing. Some indeed do deserve to; others are classics—if but given enough play to realize it. Those games which appear on numerous lists are those able to weather this fickle attitude among gamers. Too, you must realize that the top listings of our regular "popularity contest" are greatly affected by what has been recently featured in these pages. And it's been some time since anything has appeared in print on *FLATTOP*.*

*So, do not judge any game's value by its showing in the "Top Twenty". If anything, *FLATTOP* has continued to show some entrenched support since it does show up from time to time. I hardly consider *SL* an "instant" game and doubt that gamers will "want a break", notably so with the impending release of *ASL*. But I do agree that more scenarios in our pages for any game will increase its appeal. The difficulty lies in receiving them, finding time to test them, and then finding the space to print those that seem suitable. Certainly, Mr. Payne's scenario for *FLATTOP* is the type that makes it all worthwhile.*

## THE QUESTION BOX

### RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

**Q.** Is rail ownership determined *before* or *after* second impulse combat?  
**A.** After all second impulse combat is finished, Rule 4.4 is misleading.

**Q.** If the Axis captures both Moscow and Leningrad and the Russians have no ZOC along the rail line from Moscow to hex K2 to Leningrad, does the Axis gain control of this rail line all the way to K2?  
**A.** Yes!

**Q.** Must you enter a city that you control to gain control of its rail capacity?

**A.** No, if you control the city and it is out of enemy ZOC at the end of your turn then you automatically control its rail lines. This is the only case in which your rail head can move into a hex that you never actually entered.

**Q.** Assuming no units intervene, what happens to a stretch of rail line that is between two Axis cities and, at the same time, between two Russian cities?

**A.** At the end of the Axis turn it becomes Axis, and at the end of the Russian turn it becomes Russian. In effect, this means that neither side can use the stretch for rail movement (it is always enemy-controlled during the movement phases), but both sides can use it for supply.

**Q.** If a unit invades during MAR/APR, when does it have to trace supply again?

**A.** At the end of its MAY/JUN turn. The unit is automatically supplied on the turn it invades, but it must trace supply normally on its side's next turn.

**Q.** Can the Russian player put a worker in a city on the same movement phase that he captures that city?

**A.** No. Russian workers must be placed in cities (in Russia) that were under Russian control at the start of the current Russian turn.

**Q.** If the Axis player cannot make a Panzer Grenadier substitution on the scheduled turn, can he make it later (when he gets an infantry unit of the proper type)?

**A.** No. If the substitution is not made on schedule, it is lost.

**Q.** Can an attacking unit in a woods hex retreat? If the attacker wants it to?

**A.** No! A unit that attacks or defends while in a woods hex cannot retreat.

### PANZERKRIEG

**Q.** May units stacked together retreat to different hexes?  
**A.** Yes.

### PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN

**\$18.00**

#### The Battle of Smolensk, July 1941

**PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN** has long been accorded the status of a "classic" in the wargaming hobby, and this perception shows through in the readership-generated rating for the game. The Overall Rating would have placed it 25th on our listing—if enough responses had been received. It would seem that the strengths that characterized it a decade ago remain strong in our view.

As Mr. Robinette points out in his lead article, at the Series Replay highlights, and as these ratings support, *PGG* is highly playable, with a Completeness of Rules value that is enviable in these days of complex simulations. Yet there is a depth to the play that many have overlooked despite its moderate Complexity level. The unique features of the game remain as intriguing today as yesterday. Drawing on several years of experience with the game and the thousands of words that have been printed about it (an appendix to the rulebook lists the best articles that have appeared in the hobby press on *PGG* to date), the AH development team was able to clean up the few ambiguities that did exist. The play balance and excitement of the design has been retained, both ratings being well above the average for the RBG. And the components show the usual solid

**Q.** Rule 10.1 states that for a unit to be in Command Control it "must be located within seven hexes of a friendly headquarters unit." May this path be traced through impassable terrain such as all-sea hexes or across major rivers?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** Is Weather checked at the beginning of the first turn of each scenario?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** May reinforcing units be voluntarily deployed?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** May Tank and Panzer Armies be moved before they are combined or broken down?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** May the additional combat unit allowed to stack in a bridgehead add its combat strength into attacks from or the defense of the bridgehead hex?

**A.** No.

**Q.** May out-of-supply units construct fortifications?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** Do fortifications built in woods' hexes redouble the defenders' already doubled defense strength?

**A.** Fortifications may not be constructed in woods; amend 18.1

**Q.** May fortifications be destroyed at any time voluntarily by the owning player? Must friendly combat units be present to destroy the fortification?

**A.** Fortifications may be voluntarily destroyed during any phase of the owning player, and no units need be present.

**Q.** May Panzer Corps or Tank Armies be sea-transported? May airfields be sea-transported; air units?

**A.** No. Yes; no. Amend 20.4.

**Q.** May a unit to be railroad-moved begin its turn on a friendly RR hex that is in an enemy zone of control?

**A.** No.

**Q.** Is there a limit on the number of units which can utilize rail movement in a turn?

**A.** No.

**Q.** May units entering as reinforcements use rail movement on the turn of arrival?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** By rule 10.21, "Reserves may cross major rivers only at bridges or bridgeheads." How about at river crossings?

**A.** No.

## AH RBG RATING CHARTS

The following games are ranked by their reader-generated overall Value rating. Further aspects of reader response to our titles are indicated by the ratings in other categories. By breaking down a game's ratings into these individual categories, the gamer is able to discern for himself where the title's strengths and weaknesses lie in the qualities he values highly. Readers are reminded that the Game Length categories are measured in multiples of ten minutes (thus, a rating of "18" equates to three hours).

### WARGAME RBG

Title	Overall Value	Components	Complexity	Completeness of Rules	Playability	Authenticity	Game Length	Shortest	Longest	Year	Sample Base
1. GI	2.02	1.93	10	3.01	3.38	1.88	12.84	35.33	1982	264	
2. COI	2.06	1.95	9	3.29	3.13	1.99	11.61	29.27	1978	532	
3. 3R	2.21	2.67	10	3.81	3.40	2.73	25.94	69.24	1981	273	
4. COD	2.23	1.97	9	3.12	3.08	1.85	12.15	30.20	1980	224	
5. TRC	2.29	2.53	4	2.52	2.12	3.11	17.44	37.74	1976	540	
6. SL	2.31	2.09	8	3.48	2.87	2.45	10.17	27.90	1977	680	
7. UF	2.42	2.26	4	2.57	1.31	2.84	4.84	13.05	1983	58	
8. B-17	2.51	2.62	3	2.52	1.86	2.21	3.30	11.50	1983	87	
9. WS&IM	2.53	3.04	6	2.93	2.67	2.39	7.01	34.90	1975	464	
10. W&P	2.61	2.76	5	3.46	2.93	3.04	13.04	57.19	1980	374	
11. BB'81	2.67	2.46	4	2.53	2.94	2.91	19.62	35.09	1981	277	
12. TLD	2.68	1.95	8	3.72	3.54	2.04	24.44	170.68	1980	119	
13. VITP	2.72	2.86	2	2.89	2.22	4.52	16.96	22.36	1977	420	
14. CAE	2.85	3.01	4	2.32	2.89	2.52	25.14	32.57	1976	252	
15. SON	2.92	3.03	10	3.72	4.09	1.92	29.50	81.78	1981	123	
16. SOA	2.97	2.79	3	2.73	2.41	3.88	18.22	22.57	1981	232	
17. FE	3.00	2.72	7	3.21	3.21	3.00	21.17	49.05	1980	345	
18. FRED	3.00	3.41	4	2.93	2.58	2.75	12.25	24.67	1983	58	
19. SUB	3.08	2.64	8	3.13	3.08	2.74	9.41	26.15	1978	281	
20. MD	3.13	3.51	3	2.80	2.21	3.44	14.75	20.74	1964	395	
21. AZ	3.17	2.72	7	3.18	3.86	2.68	18.63	63.40	1978	292	
22. PL	3.19	2.94	7	3.31	3.13	3.50	9.49	25.80	1974	479	
23. I776	3.21	2.97	7	3.09	3.03	3.10	10.16	45.09	1974	373	
24. FT	3.23	3.12	10	3.22	3.67	3.16	24.51	57.39	1981	196	
25. PB	3.35	3.08	6	3.73	2.90	3.94	10.35	23.07	1970	448	
26. BIS	3.45	2.96	6	3.43	3.25	3.06	12.41	26.35	1979	248	
27. AAOC	3.52	2.95	5	3.02	3.26	3.07	15.52	26.53	1978	239	
28. FITW	3.53	3.14	4	3.17	2.94	3.72	16.14	30.01	1981	100	
29. CL	3.54	3.35	5	3.15	3.33	3.79	12.53	25.53	1975	136	
30. DL	3.61	4.02	7	3.85	3.22	3.29	6.66	19.94	1981	120	
31. GOA	3.66	3.37	5	3.67	3.79	2.98	18.68	60.06	1981	297	
32. WAS	3.71	3.67	1	2.48	2.37	5.98	9.09	12.71	1976	396	
33. GE	3.72	3.12	6	4.64	4.41	2.84	13.25	57.13	1977	248	
34. AF	3.74	4.16	7	3.98	3.34	3.35	5.61	16.02	1980	192	
35. AIW	3.74	3.05	8	2.92	3.52	3.06	8.69	25.36	1977	308	
36. LRT	3.75	3.60	4	3.53	3.39	2.96	13.04	17.00	1982	56	
37. TR	3.80	3.76	3	3.33	3.60	3.70	9.51	25.79	1980	72	
38. WAT	3.83	4.17	2	2.95	2.64	5.00	17.08	23.13	1962	296	
39. NP	3.87	3.29	3	3.27	2.56	4.89	9.69	14.40	1978	159	
40. AK	3.92	4.38	2	3.30	2.48	5.09	14.49	19.13	1964	492	
41. AL	4.03	4.05	5	3.69	3.18	3.57	12.34	17.93	1974	217	
42. TB	4.06	3.53	7	3.48	4.47	2.50	11.28	32.50	1975	304	
43. RW	4.14	3.14	5	3.32	2.91	3.98	4.22	21.15	1973	311	
44. JU	4.17	3.20	6	3.61	3.83	3.22	16.01	36.66	1974	193	
45. PAA	4.17	4.24	5	3.79	3.99	3.70	15.51	25.24	1981	144	
46. DD	4.22	4.07	2	3.04	2.88	4.64	17.54	26.25	1977	367	
47. CH	4.39	3.80	4	3.35	3.52	4.67	14.76	24.96	1961	140	
48. STAL	4.39	4.29	2	2.88	2.75	5.83	20.57	28.85	1963	320	
49. LW	4.45	3.75	5	3.77	3.79	4.79	13.36	34.14	1971	372	
50. FR	4.79	3.49	4	3.47	3.75	4.06	16.27	26.95	1972	244	
51. BL	4.73	4.16	7	3.65	3.77	5.27	20.43	41.44	1965	336	
52. TAC	5.62	5.25	1	2.79	3.23	6.34	11.70	19.29	1961	285	

**COMING UP  
NEXT  
TIME**



With a Napoleonic theme, Vol. 21, No. 2 was sure to be a crowd-pleaser (at least among wargamers). Indeed, the overall rating (3.07) was also an editor-pleaser. Andrew Blauvelt's comprehensive "Test of Arms" not surprisingly took the top slot among the individual article ratings. However, equally fine articles on *WAR & PEACE* and *BATTLE FOR ITALY* made their mark in the minds of the readership too. Ratings for all the articles in Vol. 21, No. 2 are as follows:

TEST OF ARMS .....	279
EMPEROR AT WAR .....	218
ACTION AT ARCOLA .....	176
SPAIN FOR THE SPANISH .....	127
THE CORSICAN FACTOR .....	91
THE 1776 EXPERIENCE .....	85
SQUAD LEADER CLINIC .....	50
KEEPING THE REPUBLIC FREE .....	48
FORCE MARCH TO VICTORY .....	42
THE LOWLANDS GAMBIT .....	30
BY THE BOOK .....	25
AH PHILOSOPHY .....	17
THE COMPLEAT DIPLOMAT .....	12

The Avalon Hill Game Company is looking for qualified gamemasters to run tournaments using our games at the upcoming ORIGINS convention in Baltimore, June 27-30 1985. Each GM will be solely responsible for paying event fees, filling out event forms with the convention sponsors, and providing any promised prizes. However, each GM will receive all entry fees from the convention organizers after the event has been staged, as well as free admission and merchandise certificates for use as prizes from AH. Interested parties should write both to The Avalon Hill Game Company for official sanction (to avoid duplication) and to ORIGINS '85, P.O. Box 139, Middletown, NJ 07748, for the necessary forms.

With attention at AH already turning to ORIGINS '85, it is inevitable that some new promotions will be unveiled. The first mentioned should be of interest to all. The Avalon Hill Game Company is reactivating the *Elite Club*. Long-time readers may remember the original offer, which was featured for several years; in essence, a discount was presented to our best customers. This time, instead of offering \$1.00 off each game, we will be giving a flat 10% off and it will apply to all items—games, parts, magazines, special publications, everything. New tickets are being printed now, and will carry coupons good through August 1989. By simply attaching one such ticket to his order, a customer can obtain the 10% discount applied to his entire purchase. To join the Elite Club, a minimum one-time purchase of \$90.00 will be required. The purchase can be made at any time, even at the ORIGINS booth. Indeed, ORIGINS will see the kick-off of this latest bargain.

Progress continues slow but sure in the ongoing Postal AREA Championships. In the *AFRIKA KORPS* competition, the field has finally been narrowed down to three finalists: Frank Preissle, Joseph Beard and David Kopp. In *WATERLOO*, Kevin McCarthy has qualified for the finals but is awaiting the outcome of the Peter Landry-James Naughton match. In *BATTLE OF THE BULGE*, Joe Drummond and Claude Todoroff are still battling it out for the last pass into the finals where Don Burdick, Jeff Power, Frank Peterson and Alan Dudderand are already engaged. In the *STALINGRAD* contest, David Kopp, Bill Armstrong, Frank Preissle and Gregory Smith are in a close four-way battle, having eliminated Stuart Martin from the finals. *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* has also entered the final round with Robert Jones, Ed Mineman, Pat Flory, Bill

## Infiltrator's Report

Salvatore and Robert Shurdut all still in contention. *D-DAY*, that fifty-turn monster, is apparently dragging out to the end with Frank Preissle and Kevin McCarthy fighting it out for the final slot against Don Burdick. In *ANZIO*, Tom Oleson and David Downing are battling it out for the crown. The *PANZERBLITZ* tournament ended some time ago with Bruce Remsburg triumphant and ready to defend his crown against all comers. Anyone wishing to challenge Bruce for this championship should forward his formal request to Don Greenwood in care of The Avalon Hill Game Company.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Kathy Byrne has accepted the position of General Editor of *Diplomacy World*, the premier periodical on the *DIPLOMACY* hobby. Ms. Byrne comes to her new post after outstanding service as Co-Director of the US Orphan Game Service and as Boardman Number Custodian.

After a too-long hiatus, Charles Vasey's *Perfidious Albion* returns to a regular and timely schedule. For many years, this English publication provided a literate, witty and thought-provoking look at the hobby for its devoted—and occasionally outraged—readership. Overlooking no subject dealing with wargaming, *Perfidious Albion* again gives game reviews, industry gossip, hobby personalities, developments, and general what-not. Of particular interest to us here were recent reviews that included surveys of *UP FRONT* and Victory Games' *Nato* and *Civil War*. Mr. Vasey is once more in top form, at times with a touch of acerbity, often with tongue firmly planted in his very British cheek. Not everyone's cup of tea, but always insightful, *Perfidious Albion* may be obtained by contacting Mr. Vasey at 14 Osprey Gardens, Selston, Surrey CR2 8TB. Last reported price for an issue was 62p British and \$1.07 for American orders.

*Omni* Magazine has, for a number of years, announced its "twenty best games" in the December issue. Although the selection process is not explained, and some of the "games" look more like toys, the list does reach millions of readers around the world and selection to it is an acknowledged honor. The Avalon Hill Game Company has reason to be proud this year, for two of our games were listed. For the best role-playing game on the market, the editors gave the nod to *RUNEQUEST*, chosen over the likes of *James Bond* and *Star Trek*. Among the many pleasing features of *RUNEQUEST* mentioned, special stress was given to the new rulebooks, which makes the game "more accessible to first-time players". Among trivia games, *Omni* chose our *TRIVIA*. It seems that the basis for eliminating others was the quality of questions and the unique and playable system found in *TRIVIA*. Now, if *Omni* just had a category for best war-game . . .

Once again, the opening for nominations for the *Rod Walker Award for Literary Excellence* in the *DIPLOMACY* hobby has been announced by Larry Peery. Nominations are accepted in four categories: fiction, strategy and tactics, hobby oriented, and special. In each category, the best article on the game is being sought. For the 1985 award process, four new members for the nomination board have been announced; Steve

Knight, Bill Quinn, Paul Rautenberg and Mark Berch (last year's recipient) join the five that selected the nominees that were, in turn, voted upon by the hundreds of readers of the *DIPLOMACY* hobby press. This year too, it was revealed, the nomination process has been opened to the hobby at large. Those among the readership of The *GENERAL* who may wish to contribute a nominee should contact Rex Martin by post. Such should include the article being nominated (periodical, date, page numbers—a photocopy of the article if possible) and the name of the author. These will be passed along to the secretary of the nominating committee, Larry Peery.

The challenge of Contest 120 dealt with the onboard arrival of the French Army in *HUNDRED DAYS BATTLES*; by its appearance in our "So That's What You've Been Playing" list this issue, and the number of responses, the challenge was taken up by many readers. Even though minor variations in organization occurred (primarily the switching of Mouton and Drouot), the ten winners duplicated our solution in all important particulars. The following are awarded a merchandise credit voucher from The Avalon Hill Game Company: David Brown, San Gabriel, CA; William Davis, Denver, CO; John Grant Jr., Stamford, CT; Kevin Heagerty, Ossing, NY; David Hricisak, Charleroi, PA; Bill Large, Gettysburg, PA; R.B. Roberts, Clarksburg, NJ; Lloyd Sadler, Salt Lake City, UT; Bruce St. Dennis, Granger, UT; and Michael Seibert, Lancaster, PA.

Contest 121 brought a relatively simple challenge to our readership—a straightforward calculation of who would win the game of *NAVAL WAR* depicted. To win on the expected number of correct answers, the card played by South (if allowed to play) was asked for also.

The calculation of the winner of the game is obvious. Given the number of points at the beginning of the hand, and those of the ships already sunk, at the point shown in the contest, North has amassed 99 points, South 100, West 98, and East 90. To insure a victory for the South, you only need to guarantee that the North player sinks no further ships; or, if he does, that you sink one of equal value. Luckily, this is assured.

South will draw two of the three cards remaining to be played. By careful count of the ships shown still in play and those in the *Deep Six* pile of the players, it is apparent that one of the "Additional Ship" cards remain undrawn (since these must be played immediately in lieu of a normal play if drawn). If the North player draws this card, the game is over and South has won. If however, he should draw any other card (since this is the only red card that is certain in the remaining deck), it is possible for him to sink the *Mississippi*. Since there are no cards that allow even four hits for the gun calibres shown on his fleet, it is not possible for him to send the *Missouri* or *Rodney* down. Thus, you must either protect the crippled *Mississippi* or sink his *Scharnhorst*.

Should you draw the "Additional Ship" card still lurking in the deck first, he will certainly sink the *Mississippi*. In turn, you play the 16" Salvo card to send down the *Scharnhorst*. Should you draw any black card, you may either play the "Smoke" to protect your cripple, or fire and put down the *Scharnhorst* to end the suspense. Since firing on the enemy guarantees the win, obviously this is the preferred next card played. Should either player draw the extra "Additional Damage" card, the results are the same. Thus, the final score will either be North 99 points and South 100, or North 104 and South 105. In either case, South has won the game.

## OPPONENTS WANTED

The Huntsville Gaming Club is looking for war-gamers in the Huntsville area. Meetings twice monthly. Information please contact: Dudley Kidd, 2421 Piedmont Rd., Huntsville, AL 35810, (205) 859-1581.

Freelance and consultant pm opponents wanted for VITP, 3R, TRC (RCX variant), AL and Victory at Sea II. Mike Sanches, 536 S. Dorchester, Anaheim, CA 92805, (714) 991-3277.

Experienced pbm player would like to GM a 2 player pbm game for a Series Replay. I will accept turn-by-turn comments, accept hidden movement envelopes, and supply neutral comments. Mike Sanches, 536 S. Dorchester, Anaheim, CA 92805, (714) 991-3277.

16-year old novice seeks opponents in area for TB, SL and COI. Call 210-220-1000 or Bill Dunaway, 7000 N. Lakewood Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91306, (818) 348-6152.

FTF weekends. Mature novice, collector, solitaire player, wants adult (30+), for fun gaming. TLD, Gulf Strike, many AH—VG games. Gary Guyton, 7337 Independence Ave., #12, Canoga Park, CA 91303, (714) 704-4702.

Adult player would play any serious opponent, pbm VITP, W&P also need a system. Charles Hall, P.O. Box 4002, El Monte, CA 91734.

For Sale large game collection. Many AH first editions AL, AZ, CAE, BL, AK. Send SASE to: Phil Conrad, 527 14th Street, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266, (213) 543-3974.

Unrated 26-year old seeks mature opponent for pbm SL. You choose scenario. I choose sides. Lee Andrade, 1105 South Street, Richmond, CA 94804.

San Diego area gamers: join the Game Towne Clash '85 (ss). Open gaming Sundays, facilities available 7 days/wk. Pay dirt league, pbm DIP, AH classics, Game Towne, 3954 Harvey St. (Old Town), San Diego, CA 92110, (619) 291-1666. Adult competition sought for SL, COI, COD, GI. Also DIP, SON, UF, Richard Anderson, 925 Guerrero, #1, San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 826-5327.

Gamer in Korea will relocate to Fort Lewis, WA in May '85. Seattle and Tacoma gamers please write me: CPT. Garth G. Germond, HHC, 8th Persom, AFPO SF 96301.

25-year old gamer and designer seeks opponents for SL, BR, KM, VG titles. Play seriously but for fun. Call 210-220-1000 or David S. Avila Pequeno, Santa Barbara, CA 93111, (805) 964-7690.

Adult gamer seeks opponents for SL, COI, COD and GI. Have games, willing to teach new players. Dwight Jones, 3626 NW 22nd Terr., Gainesville, FL 32605, 372-8387.

Attorney, 26, Area 1500 Prov. seeks honor system rated pbm in TRC, PB, PL. Two game series to 21 please. Brad Bettin, 149 Harbor Town Circle, Melbourne, FL 32935.

Wanting ft and pbm I will fit most AH titles. Pbm SL through GI, TRC, FE, GOA, AF, AK, AZ. Hal Van Kugelman, 544 Bradenton Rd., Venice, FL 33592.

3R, AK, 3R, TRC, VITP, W&P, WAS, Bill K. Strelkoper, 1105 37th Ave., Vero Beach, FL 32960, 562-0548.

35-year old former gamer of PB, PL, RW, BL, looking for ft players and club to join. Jim Perdue, P.O. Box 2631, Norcross, GA 30091, 656-2616.

## OPPONENTS WANTED

Pbm AK, BB'S, BL, LRT, WAT and Panzer Command. Rated or unrated. Dan Keirns, P.O. Box 2932, Pocatello, ID 83206-2932.

Recently moved to area. Average gamer seeks adult opponents for HI, UF, TRC, PAA, BLIS and VITP. Want into adult clubs in area. Alan Geller, 681 W. Wrightwood, Chicago, IL 60621, (312) 929-3445.

I'm looking for pbm opponents for BL, TAC, TAC II and Kriegsspiel. I need pbm systems. Scott McNamich, 1160 Barksdale, G.A.F.B., IN 46797.

Pbm opponents for CIV, DIP, FG, KM, RB, SRA, SST, 3R, TT, VITP, W&P, and WSIM. HELP! No players in Leavenworth? Bob Sweeney, 614 Custer, Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027, (913) 651-4864.

The Baltimore Conflict Gamers' Club is now open for membership. Contract: Larry Benet, Jr. —768-2159 or John Brevoort—944-9166.

1500+ opponents wanted for HI, UF, BB-81 (2nd ed.), CIV, JUT, TRC, 3R, 1776, will switch to other games later. Howard Newby, 2700 Paluski Hwy., Apt. C—Chase Manor Motel, Edgewood, MD 21040, 676-5200.

Non-area gamer desires pbm competition in AL, CAF and CL. Prefer honor system. All inquiries answered. Martin Svensson, 6153 64 Ave. #3, Raverville, MD 20737, (301) 779-1689.

Seeking adult ft in Boston/Quincy area for TRC, BB, FE, AO, and PGG. Ed Druckman, 11 Chester St., Quincy, MA 02170, (617) 472-8353.

1200 Prog. wants Area opponents for BB'81: time limit one maximum, less whenever possible. I like prompt games! Any ft opponents in BC area? Alan Finner, 78 Chestnut, Battle Creek, MI 49017, (616) 965-8706.

27-year old looking for ft area rated or not games of family SUBS, others. Any clubs around? Bob Sauer, R.R. Box 1656, Grayling, MI 49738, (917) 249-2292.

Player PL, AIW. Prefer area rated. My rating is 1200 Prog. Charles Blair, 207 Cherry, Jefferson City, MO 65101, (314) 751-2633.

Want a pbm that will do well in the DRC (campaign game) and DD. Area opponents only. I'll 1210 Prog. Ron Robertson, 2821 Fondren, Dr., St. Louis, MO 63129, (314) 892-0455.

Age 30 veteran of 17 years gaming; seeking HI plus ANY. Ah title preferred. 1445 Melarkey, Winnemucca, NV 89445, (702) 623-4139.

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Pbm opponents wanted for SL, COI, COD, GI. I have approx. 200 scenarios. Vince Lewonki, 260 Clifton Ave., Mt. Holly, NJ 08060, 267-7448.

Experienced 25-year old seeks gamers in Western NY. Over 21 please. Will pm. Unimpaired by area ratings. 3R, SL, 1776, W&P, TRC, plus. Paul Brauer, P.O. Box 92, 2438 Main St., Arcade, NY 14009, (716) 492-2741.

Seeking any gamers in Brooklyn area for SL, COI, COD, GI. I am a beginner but pick up fast. Paul Brauer, P.O. Box 92, 2438 Main Ave., Bklyn, NY 11234, (718) 531-3199.

Adult gamer (24) seeks ft opponents for AK, CH, MD, NP, STAL, FRED. Large gameroom available. Mature players only. J.P. Kelly, 196 Baltic St., Apt. 3, Brooklyn, NY 11201, (212) 855-6921.

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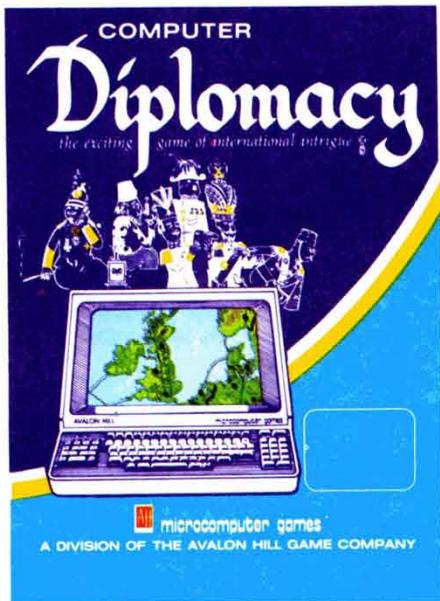
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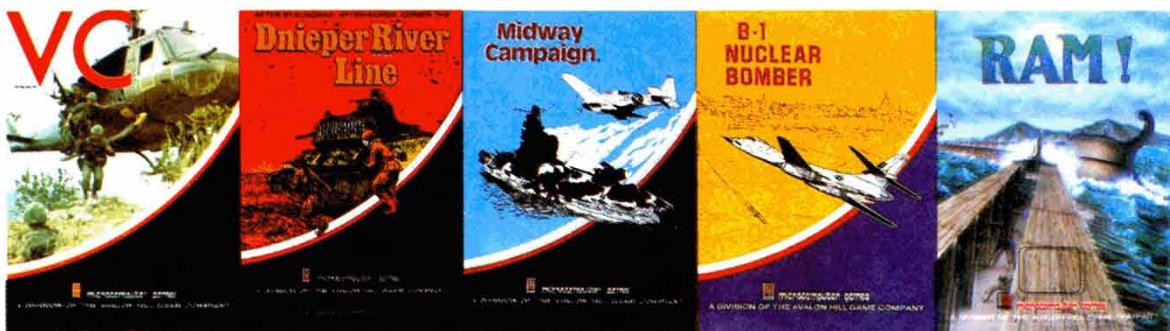
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Rate each category by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate space to the right (1 equating "excellent"; 5, "average"; 9, "terrible"). **EXCEPTION:** Rate items 7a and 7b in terms of minutes necessary to play the game, in ten-minute increments. (Example: If you've found it takes two and a half hours to play the basic scenario of *FRANCE 1940*, enter "15" for category 7a.) For an explanation of the categories, refer to the AH Philosophy of Vol. 19, No. 4. Sub-categories are indicated by italics. Enter ratings only for those categories relevant to the game in question. Note that AH's ratings for Complexity and Year of Publishing have been provided; do not rate these categories.

1. Overall Value
2. Components
- 2a. Mapboard
- 2b. Counters
- 2c. Player's Aids
3. Complexity
- 3a. Complexity
4. Completeness of Rules
5. Playability
- 5a. Excitement Level
- 5b. Play Balance
6. Authenticity
7. Game Length
- 7a. Basic/Shortest
- 7b. Advanced/Longest
8. Year of Publication

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- Afrika Korps—AK, Air Force—AF, Alexander—AL, Alpha Omega—AO, Amoeba Wars—AW, Anzio—AZ, Arab-Israeli Wars—AIW, Assault On Crete—AOC, Bismarck—BIS, Blitzkreig—BL, Battle Of The Bulge—BB, Bull Run—BR, Caesar Alesia—CAE, Caesar's Legions—CL, Chancellorsville—CH, Circus Maximus—CM, Civilization—CIV, Conquistador—CON, Cross Of Iron—COI, Crescendo Of Doom—COD, Dauntless—DL, D-Day—DD, Diplomacy—DIP, Down With The King—DWTK, Dragonhunt—DH, Firepower—FP, Flat Top—FT, Fortress Europa—FE, France 40—FR, Frederick the Great—FRED, Freedom in the Galaxy—FITG, Fury In The West—FITW, Gettysburg—GE, G.I.: Anvil of Victory—GI, Gladiator—GL, Guns Of August—GOA, Gunslinger—GSL, Hitler's War—HW, Jutland—JU, Kingmaker—KM, Legend of Robin Hood—LRH, The Longest Day—TLD, Little Round Top—LRT, Luftwaffe—LW, Machiavelli—MA, Magic Realm—MR, Midway—MD, Napoleon—NP, Napoleon at Bay—NAB, Naval War—NW, Origins—OR, Outdoor Survival—OS, PanzerArmee Afrika—PAA, Panzerblitz—PB, PanzerGruppe Guderian—PGG, Panzerkrieg—PK, Panzer Leader—PL, Rail Baron—RB, Riechhofen's War—RW, The Russian Campaign—TRC, Squad Leader—SL, Stalingrad—STAL, Starship Troopers—SST, Storm Over Arnhem—SOA, Struggle of Nations—SON, Submarine—SUB, Tactics II—TAC, Third Reich—3R, Titan—TT, Tobruk—TB, Trireme—TR, Up Front—UF, Victory In The Pacific—VITP, War and Peace—W&P, War At Sea—WAS, Waterloo—WAT, Wizard's Quest—WQ, Wooden Ships & Iron Men—WSIM.

## WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING?

Top ten lists are seemingly always in vogue these days. Whether the subject is books on the Best Seller List, television's Nielsen ratings, or even games, the public never seems to tire of seeing how their individual favorites stack up numerically against the competition. Our preoccupation with this national pastime is almost akin to rooting the home team on to victory every Sunday. So to further cater to your whims (and to satisfy our own curiosity) we unveil The *GENERAL*'s version of the gamer's TOP TEN.

We won't ask you to objectively rate any game. That sort of thing is already done in these pages and elsewhere. Instead, we ask that you merely list the three (or less) games which you've spent the most time with since you received your last issue of The *GENERAL*. With this we can generate a consensus list of what's being bought. The degree of correlation between the Best Selling Lists and the Most Played List should prove interesting.

Feel free to list any game regardless of manufacturer. There will be a built-in bias to the survey because you all play our games to some extent but it should be no more prevalent than similar projects undertaken by other magazines with a special interest-based circulation. The amount to which this bias affects the final outcome will be left to the individual's discretion.

The games I've spent the most time playing during the past two months are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTEST #122

To enter the *PANZERGRUPPE GUDERIAN* contest, merely answer the following.

The phase of the German Player Turn in which Vyazma falls:

The number of German die rolls required for Vyazma to fall:

The movements, overruns and combat of the German units:  
7th Panzer:

12th Panzer:

17th Panzer:

18th Panzer:

10th Motorized:

20th Motorized:

29th Motorized:

Issue as a whole . . . (Rate from 1 to 10, with 1 equating excellent, 10 equating terrible)  
Best 3 Articles

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
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# VICTORY

INSIDER

Vietnam Part II



TALBOT



# thrilling

## TALES OF VICTORY

# Turning Words Into Games, Part Two

### The Lineup

SEAD comprises half of Victory Games. In editorial, we have Robert J. Ryer, who has been in the business for over seven years and is frequently sane, despite his time on the front line; Michael E. Moore, a five-year veteran and beginning to show battle scars; and Paul M. Murphy, the new kid in the company, unscarred yet, but taking cohesion hits already. In art, we have Ted Koller, a six-year veteran of the boards who has yet to play one of our games; Rosaria Baldari, our recent addition to the art of boardwork (she still doesn't know what we do); and Jim Talbot, artist extraordinaire. Most of VG's and TAHGC's covers have come from Jim's fecund imagination and talented fingers. These six are responsible for turning the designer's ideas into professional games, and they often come through.

Victory Games' editorial staff is rather unusual in our hobby. That we have an editorial staff to begin with is very rare. Not only are they responsible for turning out a good set of rules, they actually become involved in developing the game as it goes through production. In developing the game, they seek primarily to make the game rules as accessible as possible, which may involve tearing apart the rules manuscript and reorganizing it to make understanding the rules easier.

For example, a designer may design several Combat Results Tables for different ways of resolving combat. The information may be redundant, and by adding another column or rearranging the possible combat results, several tables are combined into one. Occasionally, more drastic measures have to be undertaken with freelance designs — eliminating excessive chrome, redesigning the game system to add enjoyment to the game, or reducing the game system to its basic elements and building it anew. The final result is to have the rules read well and the game play well.

The editorial staff also must make the game counters and maps both attractive and easy to use in the game. They decide in what order of importance the bits of information are to be shown on the counters. As the number of bits per counter increases, they do numerous tests until they find the best arrangement of the information. They also must decide how the information will be presented on the map — how big will the names of cities be; how many charts, tables, tracks and displays will fit on the map; what decorative graphics should be added to the rulebook to increase playability and produce a pleasing work of art.

The basic design decisions about the maps and counters are made with the art staff. Ted Koller has been doing maps and counters for over a hundred simulation games, and is a font of knowledge about adding glitz while cutting corners. Ted, by the

way, will explain his techniques in a future "Tales." Once editorial, art, and the designer have agreed to the final look of the maps and counters, the type is set and the mechanicals begun.

As the hard components are being done, the editorial staff works on the rules. It may take several drafts before the rules come out the satisfaction of the editor and designer. Once the rules are ready, they are typeset and then laid down on boards. The final mechanicals are sent to Monarch-Avalon in Baltimore to be printed.

Thus a game goes from the designer's manuscript to the final product you buy in the store. In the next issue of the *Insider*, we'll go into more detail on the editing process of a game.

### In This *Insider*

This time around, we continue with Tony Curtis' analysis of the *Vietnam* game. Tony received developmental assistance credit on that game, and he has put his experience to good use. The article covers the variety of tactical options the U.S. commander has at his command. There are numerous examples that you can follow along with the text.

For *Ambush* fans, we also have "An Infantryman's Diary," or one gamer's impression of how his campaign went.

### In the Next *Insider*

While the final mix has not been decided, we do have a slew of articles to choose from. In the bin is another article on *Vietnam* (although after Tony's exhaustive analysis, we will wait at least an issue before printing it), and we expect articles on *Hell's Highway* and *Cold War*. And with the publication of *Purple Heart*, the second supplement to *Ambush*, we will also publish a mission of our own. Why not publish it now, I hear you ask? Because it will use some of the counters and rules found in the supplement.

By the way, *Purple Heart* is methodically working its way through typesetting by the time you read this. You will be happy to know that it follows the tradition established in the first game of "planting" bogus paragraphs that are often quite hilarious. We're thinking about a future column in Thrilling Tales that will help you locate all the paragraphs, and provide some explanation for the private jokes that appear. We'll see.

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Managing Editor: William E. Peschel  
The Victory Games Staff:

Mark Herman, Jerry Glichenhouse, Rosaria Baldari, Robert Kern, Gerry Klug, Susan Koch, Ted Koller, Michael E. Moore, Paul Murphy, Bob Ryer, Eric Lee Smith, Jim Talbot.

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# Hunting the Vietcong

## *Winning Vietnam Tactics*

By Tony Curtis

Whenever you play a single *Vietnam* scenario or campaign game, the U.S. player always has a nagging problem: the VC. Those inverted VC units are really slippery and elusive. They alert out of dangerous situations. They react out of areas where they could be trapped. They use strategic movement to escape from provinces swarming with U.S. units, or cross the border to shelters in Cambodia or Laos.

In order to catch the VC, you will have to rely on your workhorse tactic: the search and destroy (S&D). It comes in an infinite variety of shapes and sizes. There are no pre-set numbers of ground units or support levels required. The trick is to use enough force to do the job without overkilling. Not using enough force is false economy at its worst because the allocated units cannot be reused even though the VC get away. You have to throw out all of your pre-conceived ideas about how to engage in combat. Simply moving one or two units next to a VC unit in a target hex is a waste of your time and units. Occupying the target hex alone is no guarantee of success either.

The U.S. player has to develop a methodical approach to his S&D operations. You have to remember that, unlike standard combat units, the VC can react out of harm's way *before* combat. VC units are not powerful. They will lose the fight when cornered by a U.S. player utilizing sufficient force. The real trick for the U.S. player is to ensure that the VC cannot run far enough during any round of combat.

Against single VC units, I prefer to use a surround and interdict system which practically nullifies all chance of VC escape. There is a trade-off to this type of operation. It requires high numbers of ground units and support levels. The high chance of success makes it worth it. There are additional benefits to using higher force levels: higher odds produce higher VC casualties. When amassing combat strength for the higher odds attacks, make sure that the majority of the points are air or artillery points. Large numbers of ground units with little or no firepower are inherently inefficient and tend to receive more casualties than they inflict. Check out the combat results table. Eight strength points supported by 24 air/artillery points is far more effective than 24 strength points supported by 8 air/artillery points.

A second advantage is the increased pursuit bonuses generated by the higher odds. VC units surviving the first round of combat have a far less chance to escape when U.S. units are able to come storming after them with high pursuit bonuses. These higher pursuit bonuses help fuel subsequent rounds of combat. All unused pursuit translates into higher positive die roll modifiers for the combat. Finally, after the VC units are destroyed or chased across the border, the higher pursuit bonuses generated aid in repositioning the operational units for future operations or to block the retreat of VC units not yet targeted.

### Part One: Search & Destroy

The first example shows how to catch a single VC unit even when terrain most heavily favors VC chances for escape. Seven maneuver units are required. Most S&D operations require fewer, usually three to five. In extreme cases where a VC unit occupies a cultivated or grassland hex, a single U.S. battalion using +2 interdiction will still remain on or adjacent to the VC unit on any reaction die roll except a six.

We are going to run a S&D operation against a VC target unit in 1775, a marsh on the Chuong Thien/Ba Xuyen provincial border. We will

assume that the VC is a 2-1-7 battalion. The six hexes around 1775 are clear terrain, and even though a minor river hexside has to be crossed to enter 1776 and 1876, the overall movement advantage for a VC unit using alert movement is more favorable here than almost anywhere else on the map. In other words, if you can catch the VC here, you can catch them anywhere.

For this example, both Choung Thien and Ba Xuyen provinces are not firmly enough under government control to withstand free-fire and not enough under VC control where free-fire wouldn't matter. So free-fire will not be used. All province capitals and towns are garrisoned by miscellaneous ARVN battalions, not shown in the illustrations.

The U.S. player is the phasing player and he declares a S&D mission against 1775 using these previously uninvolved units:

Headquarters, 9th U.S. Infantry Division

Headquarters, 2nd Brigade, 9th Division, plus the three organic battalions, in second deployment

Illustration 1-1

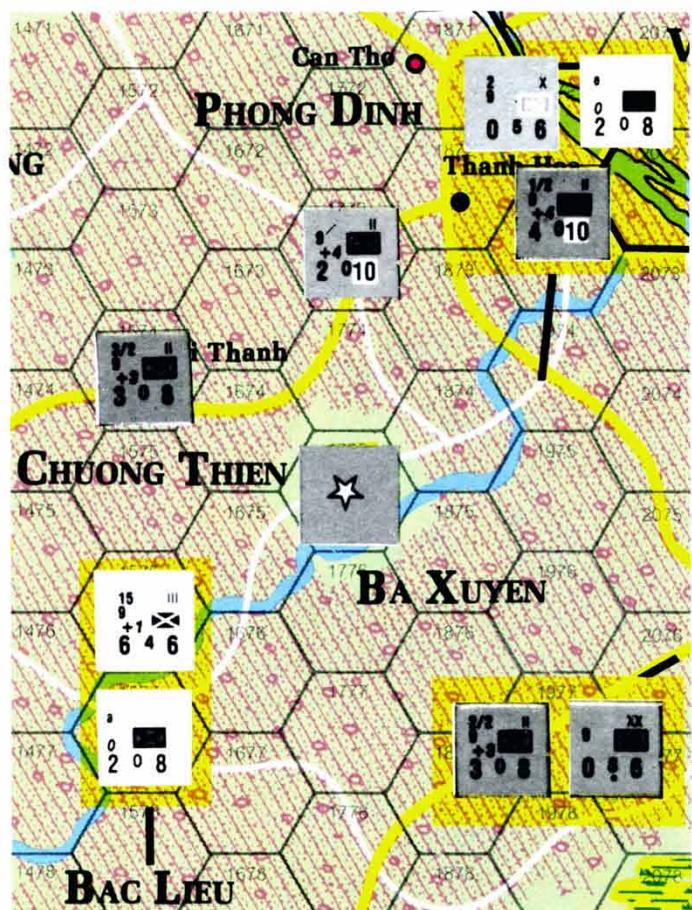
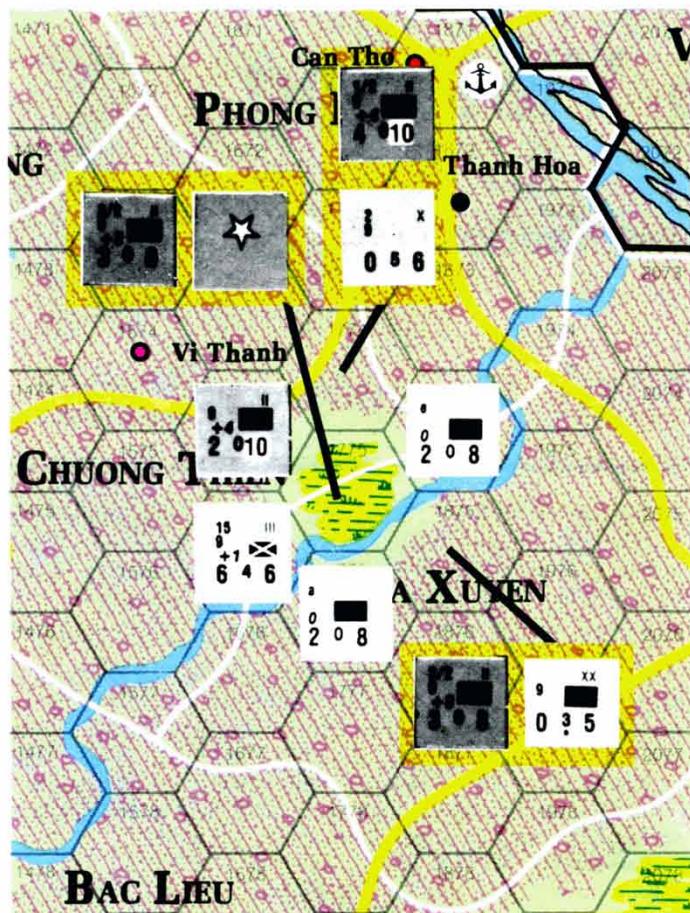


Illustration 1-2



Air Cavalry Brigade, 9th Division

16th Regiment, 9th ARVN Division (augmented side showing)

8 Air Points

Plus, a roll of 2 on the die means that 2 ranger units out of the 5 in the pool are available.

The U.S. player airmobilizes the brigade and division HQs. These units are moved to the following hexes:

16th ARVN Regiment: 1675

Ranger battalion and 16th ARVN Regiment: 1776

3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Division: 1775

AR CAV Battalion, 9th Division: 1674//

1st Battalion (Mech), 2nd Brigade, 9th Division: 1774

Ranger Battalion with 1st Battalion Mechanized: 1874

HQ, 2nd Brigade, 9th Division: 1774

2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Division: 1875

HQ, 9th Division: 1875

Fourteen points are allocated to interdiction to provide a two-point movement penalty on the VC unit. The points are all artillery, and provided as follows: 16th ARVN Regiment: 4 points; 2nd Brigade, 9th Division: 5 points; HQ, 9th Division: 5 points (leaving 3 for combat).

The VC unit in the target hex is now in a tight position. (See Illustration 1-2). If it takes alert movement, it will suffer a four-point movement penalty due to interdiction (two points) and exiting a hex with an enemy unit (also two points). At least three more movement points are needed to pass through any hex surrounding target hex 1775 (one point for the terrain and two points for exiting a hex with an enemy units). With the three-point bonus for exiting a swamp hex plus one point for being in an operation containing ARVN units, our VC unit must roll at least a four to move out of the target hex and some of the surrounding hexes. To get away entirely, a six must be rolled. Even entirely surrounded, a VC unit can still get away, but the chance is only one in six, and the unit will probably be forced into an unfavorable incidental attack in the process.

**Illustration 1-3: The Incidental Attack.** The VC unit rolls an alert roll of 5. Added to the four-point movement bonus (three for marsh terrain and one for ARVN units), the unit moves along a path which ends in 1777. While crossing 1776, however, the U.S. player declares that an incidental attack must be performed against the ARVN ranger battalion in that hex. The initial odds are 3-to-2 in favor of the VC, with no terrain modifiers for cultivated terrain. The U.S. allocates four of the eight air points to assist the rangers, making final odds three to four for a -1 die roll modifier when the VC attacks. The VC player rolls the die and gets a three, modified by the -1 to a final result of two. The VC unit loses one strength point (for casualty computations, the VC strength is four: two group strength plus four U.S. air points, reduced to two for no free-fire. Casualties are found on the 4-to-7.5 column on the attacker side). The ARVN loss is zero (ground strength two plus one VC Artillery point equals three. Use the 1-to-3.5 column, defender's side.) Helicopter loss is ignored because no combat took place in the target hex and the U.S. unit in the target hex went in on foot instead of airmobile. The VC absorbs one replacement point and completes its movement to 1777.

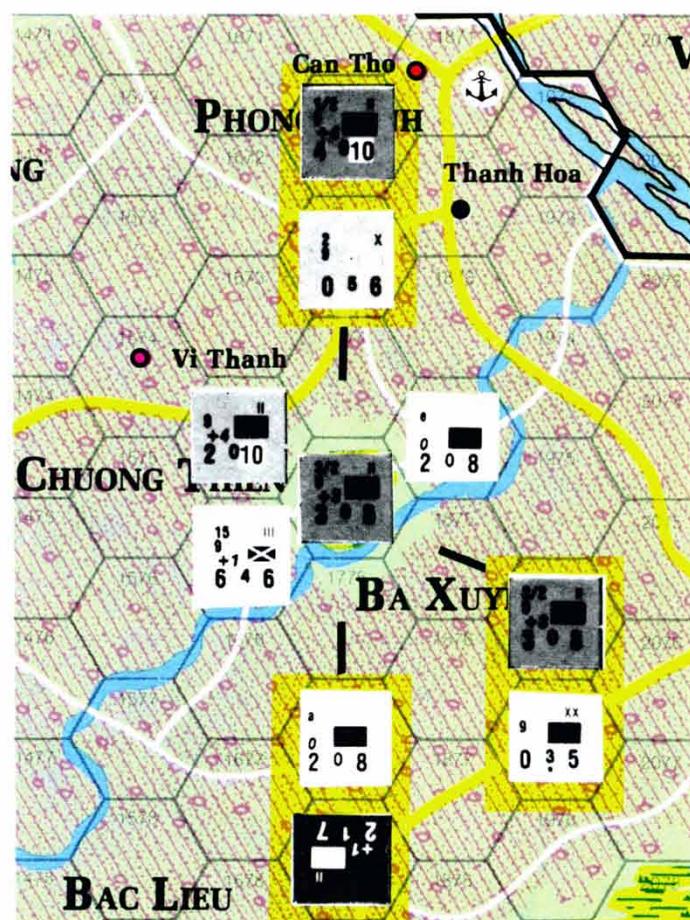
**Illustration 1-4: The VC unit is attacked.** The VC unit used all nine movement points to reach 1777: full interdiction (2), exiting with enemy unit in 1775 (2), crossing a minor river into 1776 (1), terrain cost in 1776 (1), exiting with enemy unit in 1776 (2), terrain cost in 1777 (1). To have gotten away completely, the VC unit would have needed two more movement points: leave zone of control of ARVN rangers in 1776 (1), terrain cost of 1677, 1778 or 1877 (1).

The ARVN unit, augmented by four air points, attacks with a strength of four (two for basic strength plus two points for air support: the four air points divided by two for no free-fire). The VC unit defends with three points: two for basic strength plus one for the VC artillery factor).

Note: there are three artillery points unused in HQ, 9th Division, but they cannot be used because the ARVN rangers are not a 9th Division unit. There are no modifiers to the die roll because 4-to-3 does not meet or exceed 3-to-2 odds. The U.S. player rolls and receives a five. The VC unit takes one strength point loss and absorbs one replacement point. There is no loss to the ARVN rangers. Pursuit: +2. The VC unit retreats to 2078. The U.S. player pursues.

**Illustration 1-5: The pursuit and second combat round.** The U.S. player declares the following units to be uninolved in future rounds: both ranger units are removed from the map; the 16th ARVN Regiment are air-

Illustration 1-3



mobilized to 2076; the 9th Air Cavalry Squadron is not moved; the 1st Battalion Mechanized, 2nd Brigade, 9th Division is moved by road to 2075; and the HQ, 2nd Brigade, 9th Division is moved by airmobile to 2075.

The U.S. player pursues with eight air points and the following units: the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Division is airmobilized to 2178; the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Division is airmobilized to 1978; the HQ, 9th Division is moved by airmobile to 2076.

Note that pursuit movement for ground units is the printed pursuit modifiers plus the +2 pursuit bonus gained in round one of combat. Both the 2nd and 3rd Battalion use  $3\frac{1}{2}$  movement points, rounded up to four. Both have a pursuit allowance of five (+3 printed on the counter and +2 from combat). This leaves them with a +1 modifier for second round combat. U.S. attack strength is 14 (six ground strength plus eight air points, divided by two, added to the eight artillery points that is also halved). VC defense strength is three. Basic odds is 4-to-1 which yields a +4 modifier to the die roll. The VC unit defends in marsh and receives a -1 benefit. Net die roll modifier is +4.

The U.S. player rolls a four, modified to eight. The U.S. player suffers an airmobile loss. The VC player, seeing the +4 pursuit modifier from combat, knows he cannot possibly outrun the pursuing U.S. units. He takes some comfort from inflicting an airmobile loss, and removes the VC unit from play to satisfy the two strength point loss. End of operation.

To summarize the preceding example, the most potent VC weapon — the ability to escape — is neutralized. This allows the U.S. player to effectively utilize his two premier weapons: firepower and mobility. Most of the time, the VC units won't be able to escape. In this, the most favorable of situations for the VC, there was only one chance in six that the VC unit could break contact with all of the surrounding U.S./ARVN units and force termination of the operation without first round combat. Even then, the VC unit would be forced into an incidental attack, and all available air and artillery points would be applied, since none would be needed for a first round combat which could not occur.

Other setbacks can spoil an operation. The die roll for rangers can exceed the number in the holding box, forcing the U.S. player either to scramble for more units to plug escape routes or launch the operation on a shoestring and hope the VC bombs on the alert die roll. Poor first round combat results can limit for pursuit, especially for artillery, and can cancel future combat rounds due to poor odds and the risk of high casualties.

Still, most terrain the VC hides in is less favorable (sometimes much less so) than what was presented here. Allowing for all the possible setbacks, the kill ratio should run close to five out of every six operations undertaken. Using a good U.S./FWA/ARVN force level (described elsewhere), 15 to 20 operations per turn can be conducted easily. Multiplied by two, we have 30 to 40 operations per season. If the VC player is willing to field 30 to 40 VC units, or more, per season, the U.S. player will easily destroy or force dispersal of 25 to 30 units per season.

### The Proper Way To Search & Destroy

Whenever possible, use ARVN units to surround VC units and fight the first round of combat. The firepower, surrounding and loss-taking benefits outweigh the +1 to the reaction die roll. ARVN regiments are powerful, ARVN artillery is almost as good as U.S. artillery, and the rangers are lifesavers when it comes to preventing VC escape.

In most search and destroy operations, first round combat results will be most severe for the U.S./ARVN player because the pursuit modifiers, both printed and earned in combat, are not available to offset defensive terrain advantages. Whenever strength point losses occur, assign them to the ARVN; losses in subsequent rounds may have to be borne by U.S. units alone.

Because of their low pursuit modifiers, ARVN units eat up most or all of any pursuit bonus gained through combat, thereby reducing the effectiveness of second or subsequent round attacks. Only if the ARVN units can attack in subsequent rounds without moving should they be used, and then only on a case-by-case basis. It is also wise not to put an ARVN unit in the target hex. If the VC units stay in the target hex for a second round of combat, an ARVN unit in the target hex, probably with a pursuit value of zero or one, would be obligated to attack in the second round, rendering the printed +3 or +4 U.S. pursuit bonuses useless since the lowest printed bonus of the attacker is the one used. Notice that in the example given, that the U.S./ARVN units converged

Illustration 1-4

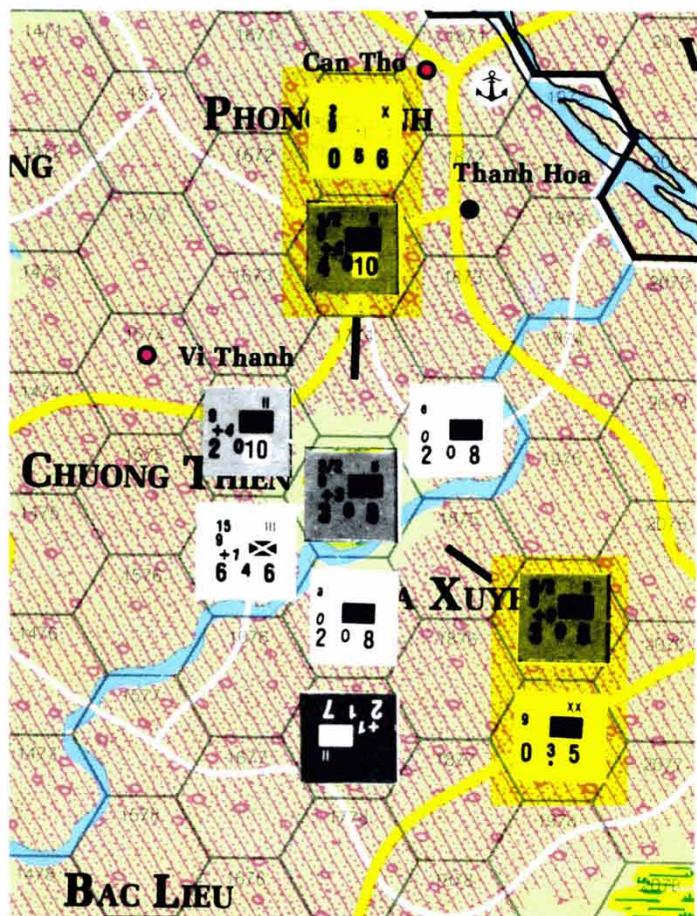
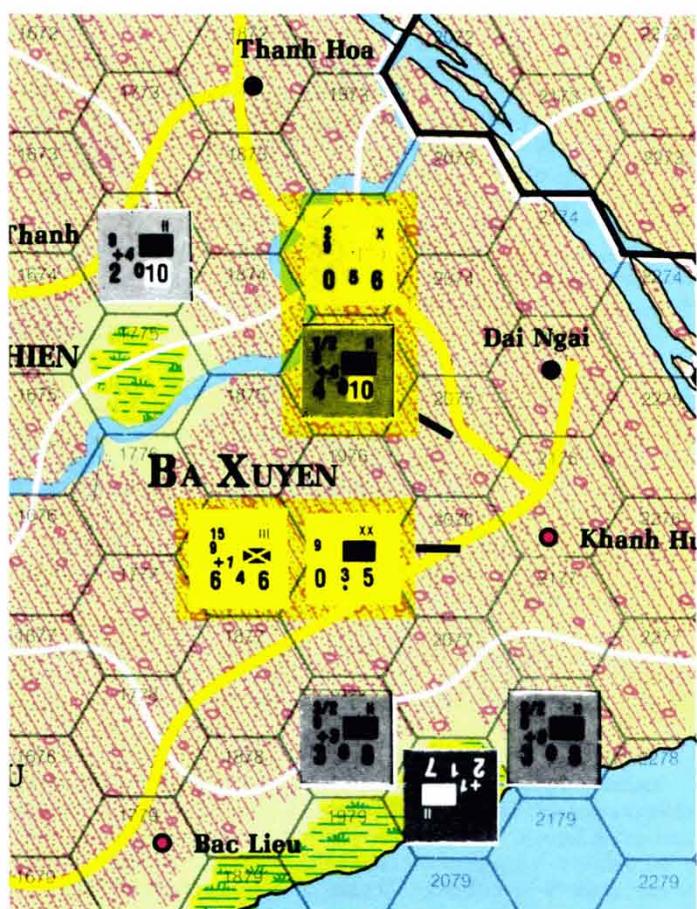


Illustration 1-5



## 6 VICTORY INSIDER

on the VC unit from all directions. Dispersing U.S./ARVN units throughout the map increases the U.S. player's ability to surround any given VC unit. Since only one ARVN ranger unit can be placed in a hex with units designated for a search and destroy operation, having all the designated units in only one or two hexes limits the number of ranger units you can put into play.

If the VC player wishes to launch VC attacks against lone battalions in the countryside, so much the better. The U.S. player usually has artillery, naval gunfire or air points on call. Let the VC player attack and take the losses, leaving you several units free to go after the attacker or other VC units later to inflict additional loss. If the VC player wants to work for you, so much the better.

The VC units which are easiest to catch, but cost the most to do, are VC units on holding missions in the mountains. The VC cannot escape easily because they usually have to move into adjacent mountain or forested hill hexes. In many instances, when a U.S./ARVN unit occupies the target hex and interdiction is applied, the VC unit cannot even exit the target hex. That often makes dispersal or combat the only two options. If it comes to a fight, a doubled VC unit on a defensive mission in the mountains is a formidable force to tackle. First round losses will be heavy (remember to bring the ARVN to the party!). There will be numerous air and airmobile losses, too.

The offsetting advantage to the U.S. player is that isolated VC units in mountain or forested hill hexes are almost always destroyed or dispersed since they cannot escape. Even when going after isolated VC units, keep some ground units and artillery around to use as offensive reserves.

A warning about keeping an offensive reserve: as the U.S. player, you can get lulled into a false sense of security as you bash an unending stream of VC battalions. Never forget that there are VC regiments too. You may send a few battalions to hunt down a VC battalion, but you'll will need much more when you run into a VC regiment. Odds for your first attack will be poor. Pursuit bonuses will not be high. In order to raise the odds and maintain contact, new ground units and artillery will have to enter on the second round. Without offensive reserves, the U.S. player either has to call off the operation and let the regiment get away, or risk taking unacceptable losses in exchange for destroying the regiment.

At this point, don't start to feel overconfident about walking over the VC. The truly competent NLF player won't give anything away. He won't go out of his way to leave isolated VC units. You will have to isolate the VC units because in most cases they will be grouped together in clumps or clusters of four to six VC units. It's a tactic akin to forming a square against cavalry, and it is very effective. VC units in a cluster keep the U.S. player from surrounding any single VC unit. Reaction movement allows the VC to shift units if necessary to block routes of U.S./ARVN pursuit, allowing VC target units to break contact. Another VC tactic with reaction movement is to react one or two VC units into the target hex. This has the unfortunate effect of turning decent first round attacks for the U.S. player into low odds/low pursuit attacks. It is entirely possible to expend several U.S./ARVN units to do nothing more than move one of these VC clusters a few hexes in one direction or another as VC units break contact and react.

You can't ignore VC clusters, but you have to have some certainty of destroying several VC battalions because of the high level of units and support points which have to be committed. A complete encirclement is not only too expensive in terms of units committed, but also futile. The NLF player isn't blind. It becomes obvious to even the casual observer that a ring is being constructed. After several U.S./ARVN units have been committed to operations where they have no chance of catching VC units, the NLF player will run the next few operations and use strategic movement to get far away from the trap. The U.S. player is left with several wasted operations and a very real sense of frustration. There are two basic U.S. tactics and several variants which serve to break up these VC clusters. They are the use of clear and secure operations and employment of offensive reserves.

### Part Two: Clear & Secure

First, some discussion about clear and secure operations. You don't use it to destroy VC units, but to set them up for future S&D operations. One or two units are moved adjacent to a target hex containing a VC unit which is part of a cluster. The VC target unit should be able to alert out with no difficulty. The payoff of the operation for the U.S.

player comes when he puts the units in the clear and secure operation into a patrol operation since they didn't end the clear and secure in the target hex. Every hex around each unit on patrol will now cost +2 over and above the terrain cost for a VC unit to leave. One or two units out on patrol will make it very difficult for VC units to retreat in at least one or two directions later.

The next step is to run a search and destroy mission against the cluster on the side opposite the patrol units. The VC player either moves the cluster out of the area before you conduct the S&D, or stands to take the S&D operation with one or two avenues of retreat cut off. On a related note, if the VC player starts a turn with several VC units adjacent to an eligible U.S./ARVN unit, it may pay to put that unit onto a patrol operation during the special operations designation phase. You get the benefit of running a clear and secure operation against several VC units, and they don't get to alert.

If you don't use clear and secure operations to block off some of the retreat routes, you will have to surround a VC cluster with operational units on the first round. This means placing a couple of operational units on the side of the VC cluster opposite from the target hex so that no matter which way a VC target unit alerts, an operational unit will be adjacent to it for first round combat.

The second major U.S. tactic is offensive reserve activation. VC target units often alert into adjacent hexes with VC units, lowering first round odds and lessening attainable pursuit modifiers. Other VC units in the cluster either through reaction movement or initial placement will be in a position to slow or halt U.S./ARVN pursuit. The only hope for continuing the operation is to bring in the offensive reserves to maintain contact and/or restore subsequent combat odds to higher levels. Here again, if the NLF player chooses to put more than one VC unit at risk as a target unit, the U.S. player should not hesitate to add enough resources to conduct the equivalent of two C&S operations, because that is really what you have. Support points for first rounds of operations should come as much as possible from air or naval points. Save the artillery to use as offensive reserves since air and naval points cannot be added on second or subsequent rounds.

Use your dedicated artillery to the maximum extent around VC clusters. So long as a subordinate unit is a part of the operation, the artillery can add its support, even though it is not tasked as part of the operation. This multiplies the value of a brigade or division headquarters many times over if it is placed on or adjacent to a VC cluster. This is one instance where the VC player helps you maximize your strength by placing units in clusters.

Three examples follow to show some of the do's and don'ts of operations against a VC cluster. The first example shows a clear and secure operation followed by a search and destroy. The second depicts an S&D operation conducted against a VC cluster by surrounding it on round one. The third example shows an S&D operation utilizing offensive reserves.

### Example One: Quang Nam Province

Illustration 2-1 shows the initial positions plus the clear and secure operation. Quang Nam province is the area of operations. Free-fire is not declared initially. It is presumed to be early in the campaign game, and U.S. airpower is not abundant. No air points are available, but four airmobile are available. For the clear and secure operation, HQ, 3rd Marine Division and 2/4, 3rd Marine Division move from 3814 to 3716. HQ, 3rd Marine Division is airmobilized to do so. The infantry battalion moves on foot. None of the artillery points are used for interdiction. The VC unit could escape on any alert roll, but elects to defend against an all-U.S. operation in hopes of inflicting U.S. casualties. Total U.S. attack strength is 7-to-2 VC for a +3 modifier. But the VC defends a mountain hex for a -3 modifier, cancelling out both. The die roll is one. Both sides suffer one strength point loss and consume one replacement point. The VC units stays for one more round. The U.S. player attacks again and rolls a five. There is no pursuit modifier (+3 printed on 2/4 battalion; -2 for a clear and secure operation; -1 for combat result). The VC unit suffers one SP loss, absorbs one replacement point, and retreats. The 2/4 unit does not pursue, and is converted over to a patrol operation.

Illustration 2-2: the VC player attempts to "strat move" the units out of the area. The U.S. player is given the next operation. The U.S. player declares an S&D operation against 3917. Ranger support is rolled for, and the U.S. receives two units. The ARVN rangers are placed in 4117

Illustration 2-1

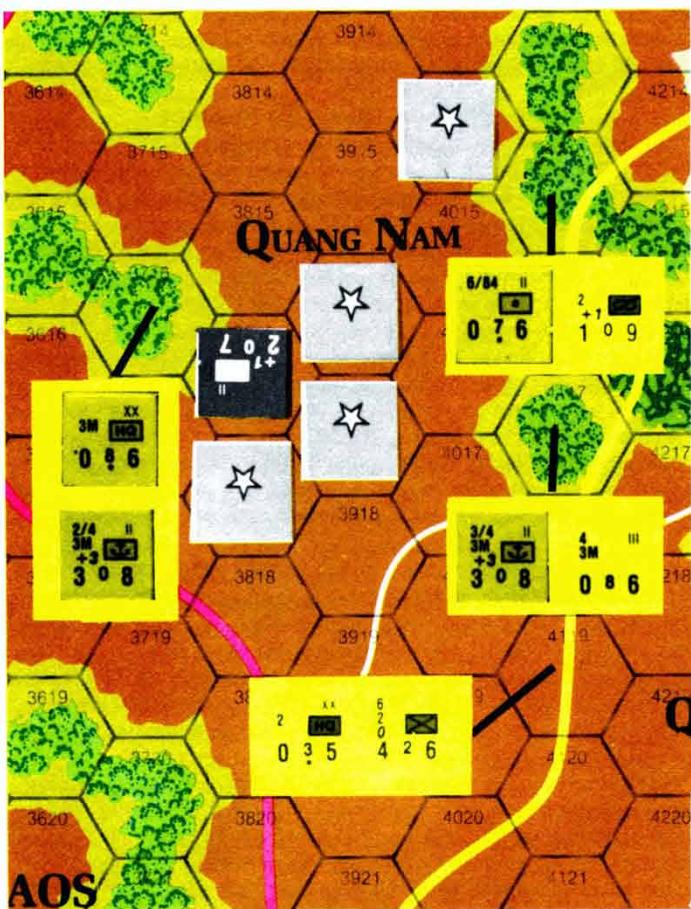


Illustration 2-2

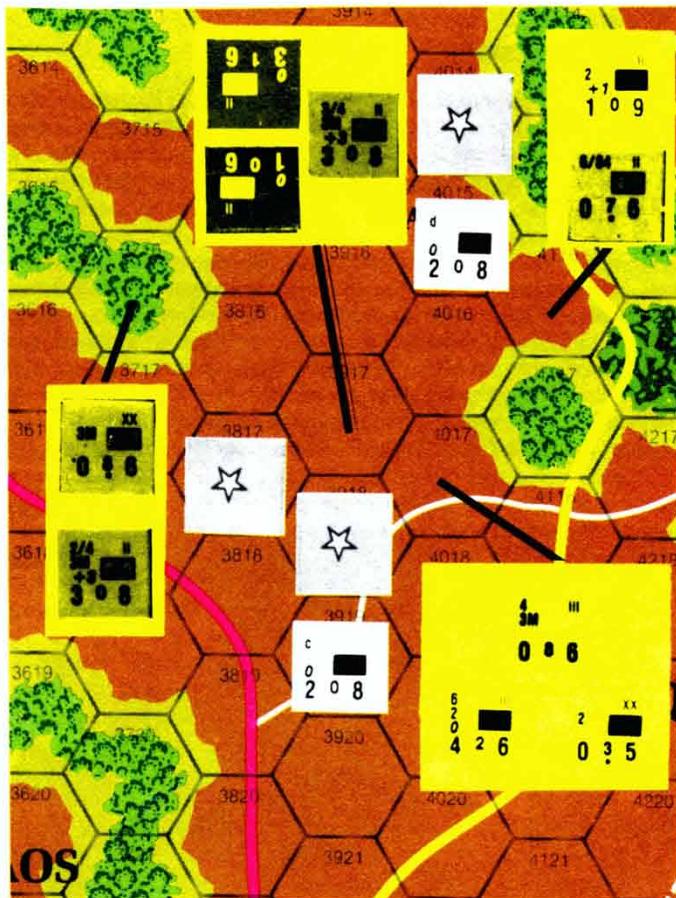
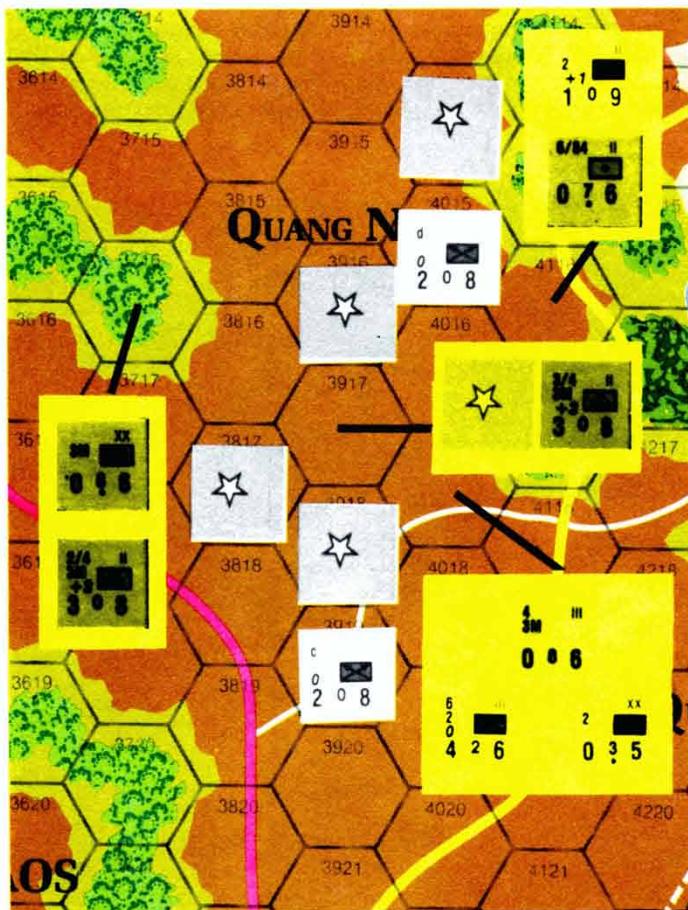


Illustration 2-3

and 4119.

Note that the VC unit which was the target of the clear and secure operation has retreated to 3918. The cluster is still unbroken. It has simply shifted and taken on a different shape. Placing that VC unit in 3918 will hinder the operation against target hex 3917. Note, however, that the clear and secure operation did yield two benefits to the U.S. player. Hexes 3815, 3816, and 3717 are almost impossible to retreat through due to the patrol status of the 2/4 Marine battalion (note the VC unit also on patrol). The VC can effectively utilize patrol to inhibit access to VC clusters or to curtail road movement). Since another 3rd Marine Division unit is part of the S&D operation, the HQ, 3rd Marine Division artillery may add its eight artillery points since it is within range.

HQ, 2nd ARVN Division and HQ, 4th Marine Regiment are air-mobilized. Fourteen artillery points are used to provide +2 interdiction (eight from HQ, 3rd Marine Division; 3 from HQ, 2nd ARVN Division; 2 from the 6th ARVN Regiment; and 1 from the HQ, 4th Marine Regiment). The remaining artillery points are held on-call for combat. As U.S./ARVN units move into or adjacent to the target hex, the three VC units not in the target hex can all react. The sequence of U.S./ARVN movement will determine when the VC units will react. All three VC units could react away from the target hex, but that would isolate the target unit and fragment the cluster. All three VC units could react into the target hex, but that would put all four into jeopardy on the second round when interdicting artillery is switched to support. The first round combat odds for the U.S./ARVN would indeed be low. Quite possibly the VC would react one or two units. For purposes of this example, the VC unit in 3916 will react into the target hex. If it does not, and the target VC unit retreats, the VC unit would have been isolated if it had remained in 3916. The VC unit in 3817 will stay in place to provide a secure path of retreat. The VC unit in 3918 will remain in place to make it more difficult for the ARVN 6th Regiment to pursue on round two.

Illustration 2-3: a die roll of three or greater on the alert roll will allow the two VC units to alert out of the target hex. The odds say that they will get a three or better, so in this example the two VC units alert to 3817 where they join a third VC unit. The U.S. player now has a problem of insufficient force. He has adjacent to 3817 only one U.S. battalion plus fourteen artillery points which would be reduced to seven if free-fire was not used. A first round combat without free-fire would go in with a -2 or -3 modifier due to basic odds plus defensive terrain modi-

fiers. The U.S. player can either attack at bad odds or declare free-fire. A low odds attack results in high U.S./ARVN casualties with no offsetting gain because there are no offensive reserves available. The only real choice is to declare free-fire, inflict as many casualties on the VC units as possible, and hope that the pacification die roll is not hurt by the minus two for free-fire.

The concept of this operation was good. The clear and secure worked well. The shortcomings for the U.S. player were twofold. First, it takes more units and support points to go after VC clusters in mountains or forested hills than anywhere else on the map. Since no additional support was available, the U.S. player should have declared free-fire at the start of the S&D operation. Without free-fire, the odds were good that the four VC units would survive to lower the pacification roll by -2 anyway. Declaring free-fire would have put more firepower into the first

round attack since only seven points are needed for +2 interdiction with free-fire. The second shortcoming was not having any ground units or artillery available to use as offensive reserves to increase second round odds and make it possible to run the three VC units into the ground.

### Example Two: Quang Tri Province

This situation portrays the effects of "surrounding" a VC cluster with U.S./ARVN units on the first round. The area of operations is Quang Tri province. Free-fire has not been declared. The following forces are available to the U.S. player: 1/4, 3rd Marine Division; an armored battalion from the 3rd Marine; the 5th ARVN regiment; two ARVN ranger units; one cruiser; four air points and two airmobile points. Firepower and maneuver units are both in short supply. The target hex is 4717. The U.S. cruiser provides +1 interdiction on the target hex. This is offset by +1 addition to VC alert movement from ARVN participation. There is enough power to eliminate the target VC unit if it remains in the target hex. There are not enough maneuver battalions to spare for a preliminary clear and secure. The VC cluster has to be surrounded to the extent that the VC unit reacting out of the target hex would remain in contact with at least one U.S./ARVN unit so that combat could be forced on the VC. Illustration 3/1 shows the initial positions.

Illustration 3-2: One ARVN ranger unit is placed in 4716 and remains there. The second ranger unit is placed in 4918 and moves on foot to 4719. Neither VC unit in the adjacent hexes take reaction movement. The 5th ARVN regiment moves on foot to 4517. The adjacent VC unit does not react. The 1/4 Marine battalion moves on foot to 4717, the target hex. The Marine armored battalion moves into 4817. The VC unit in 4617 reacts into 4518 when the 1/4 Marines move into the target hex. The cruiser provides +1 interdiction. The air points are reserved for combat.

An alert roll of three through six would allow the VC target unit to move into adjacent hex 4718. Although there is a VC unit in the hex and the terrain is rough, there are 11 U.S./ARVN ground strength points adjacent. That is not a really desirable option. On an alert roll of five or six, however, the VC target unit can move into 4518 or 4618. Both hexes are also rough terrain and contain one VC unit each. The big advantage to these hexes is the relative weakness of the adjacent ARVN units. The optimal hex is 4618 where only the ARVN ranger unit is adjacent.

Illustration 3-3: we assume that the VC target unit gets reaction roll of five and reacts into 4618. The U.S. player has only the single ARVN ranger unit adjacent to the hex. Since free-fire is not being used, total attack strength for the U.S. is four (two for the ranger and two for half

Illustration 3-1

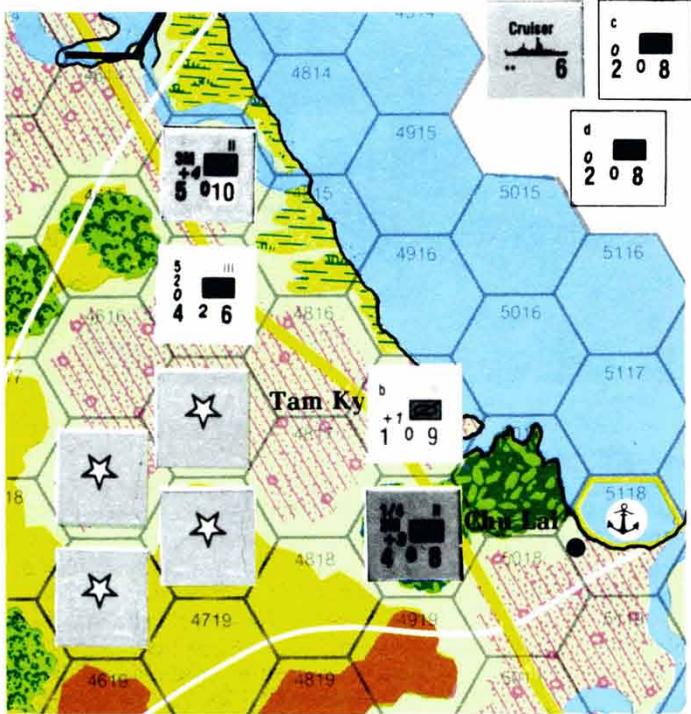
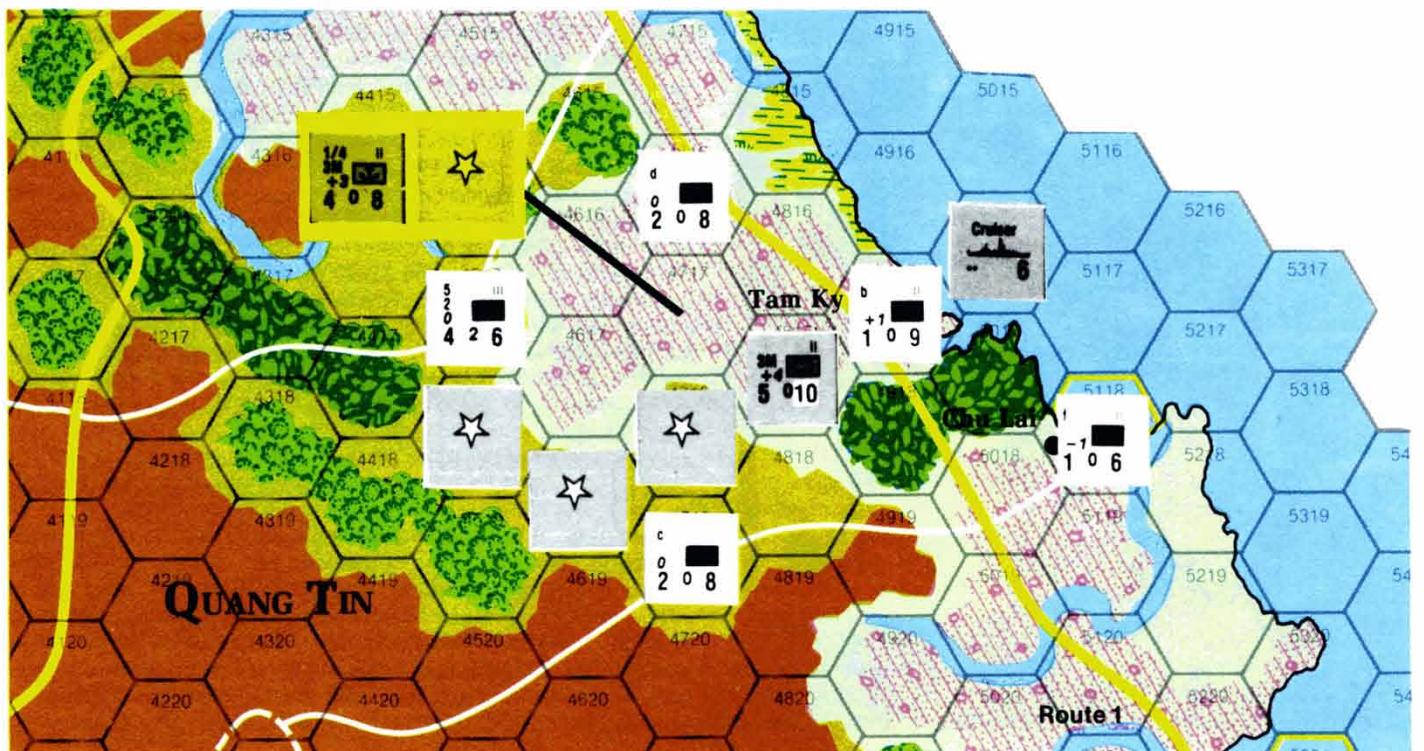


Illustration 3-2



of the available air points). Chances for a favorable combat result do not look favorable before the VC units are revealed. The U.S. player decides to attack anyway, which is probably a mistake. The VC units are revealed, totalling five strength points. Basic odds of four U.S. factors to five VC factors yields a -1 modifier to the die roll. The VC defend in rough terrain, so another -1 modifier is added. A quick scan of the combat results table is not encouraging. Out of the six results, the ARVN will lose one strength point on four of them. The VC will lose a strength point on only one out of the six. Pursuit bonuses range from +1 to -2. Should the VC stand after round one combat, the 1/4 Marines could pursue into 4617. That addition would cancel out part or all of the -2 die roll modifier, but the U.S. player still would not have a favorable attack. The VC player would probably retreat the target units out of contact after round one combat, and "strat move" the other two VC units adjacent to the retreating VC units so that a cluster would be rebuilt in a new location. The sole U.S. gain from this operation is that, temporarily at least, the cultivated hexes in Quang Tri province have been cleared.

The concept of surrounding a cluster is viable. The VC target unit was not able to break contact in round one. The problem again is lack of ground units and firepower. There were weak links in the chain of units surrounding the cluster, and there was a significant chance that the VC would alert into positions adjacent to them. Given the limitations on forces, the operation was conducted as well as could be expected. You will find situations early in the campaign game or some of the scenarios where abundant support is not available. In those cases, you have to run the operations with what's on hand, so go for it and hope for the best. If you have additional support available and run an operation in this manner, you should be shot! This example would end far more favorably if another U.S. infantry battalion also occupied 4719 with the ARVN rangers, and if six more air points were available. Carrying it one step further, add another U.S. battalion plus a 155mm battalion as offensive reserves. It becomes a walkover for the U.S.

### Example Three: Quang Gnai Province

In this example, a properly supported U.S./ARVN force with offensive reserves takes on a VC cluster in the mountains. The area of operations is Quang Gnai province. There is no free-fire. The target hex for the operation is 4821. The U.S. player has 12 air points and 4 airmobile points. The die has been rolled for ARVN rangers, and two are available. Illustration 4-1 shows the starting positions for all U.S., ARVN and VC units. All units shown are eligible to take part in the operation.

Illustration 4-2 shows the movements of the U.S./ARVN units activated



for the search and destroy operation, and the movements the VC units take in response. Three of the U.S./ARVN units are airmobilized. They are the ARVN ranger unit, the 155mm battalion and the HQ, 9th Marine Regiment. The rest move by foot from their original locations. The two Marine battalions in 5019 have not been activated for round one, but may be activated as offensive reserves in round two. None of the VC units take reaction movement when U.S./ARVN units move adjacent. The VC cluster is not completely surrounded. The VC target unit can only alert move one hex back into the mountains even if it receives the maximum alert die roll. The U.S. player allocates 14 points out of the 29 available air/artillery points: 4th ARVN regiment (2); HQ, 9th Marines (8); 1/27 155mm battalion (4).

For this example, the VC target unit receives a high enough alert die roll to alert out of the target hex and into 4721. The U.S. player attacks the two VC units in 4721. The VC units are flipped over to reveal a combined strength of six. The U.S. player has five ground strength points adjacent to the VC units plus 15 air/artillery points, reduced to 7½ because free-fire has not been declared. Basic odds are 12½ to 6, which yields a +2 die roll modifier. Since the VC occupy a mountain hex (a -3 die roll modifier), the final modifier is -1. A six is rolled, becoming a five: both sides suffer a one point loss. The U.S. loss is taken by the ARVN rangers in 4720. Both sides expend one replacement point. The U.S. player also receives a +2 modifier for pursuit.

Illustration 4-3 shows the two marine battalions in 5019 activated as offensive reserves and airmobiled to 4620 and 4522. Both use airmobile

Illustration 4-2

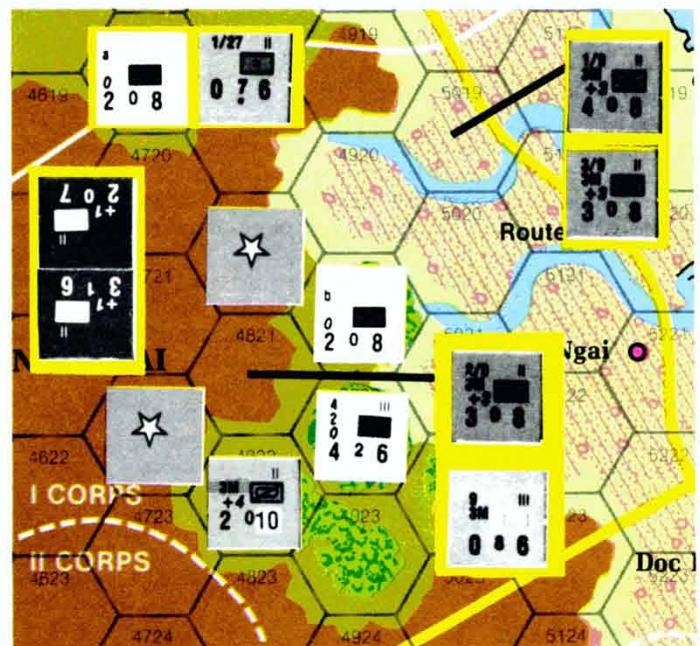
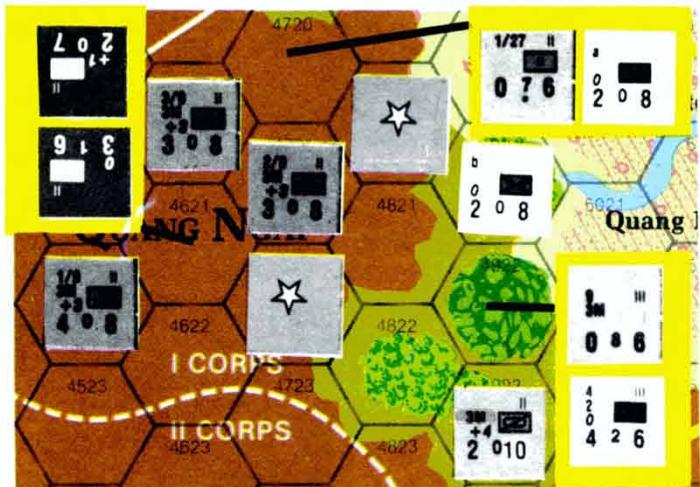


Illustration 4-3



points previously assigned to the operation. The HQ, 9th Marines uses the third point to move back to 4822. This artillery unit is in position to be airmobiled into the third round of combat if the pursuit modifier is great enough. The U.S. player assigns the fourth airmobile point to the operation, moving the 2/9 Marines to 4721. That move costs three pursuit points (one for leaving a VC zone of control, one for entering a VC zone of control in a landing hex, and one for the hex itself). It would have cost four pursuit points to move on foot, however. The 2/9 Marines have two unused pursuit points which give the U.S. player a +2 die roll modifier (the two newly activated Marine battalions are excluded from pursuit computations on their turn of activation). The U.S. player has 10 ground strength points and 9½ air/artillery points rounded down from 19 (the 155mm battalion and 12 air points). The VC still have six strength points. Basic odds are 3-to-1 which yields a +3 modifier. The VC are still in the mountains (-3 modifier). They cancel each other out, leaving the U.S. player with the +2 modifier from pursuit. Barring any really bad die rolls, this operation will end up a U.S. success. Decent pursuit bonuses should allow both artillery units to reposition to add their firepower to the third round of combat.

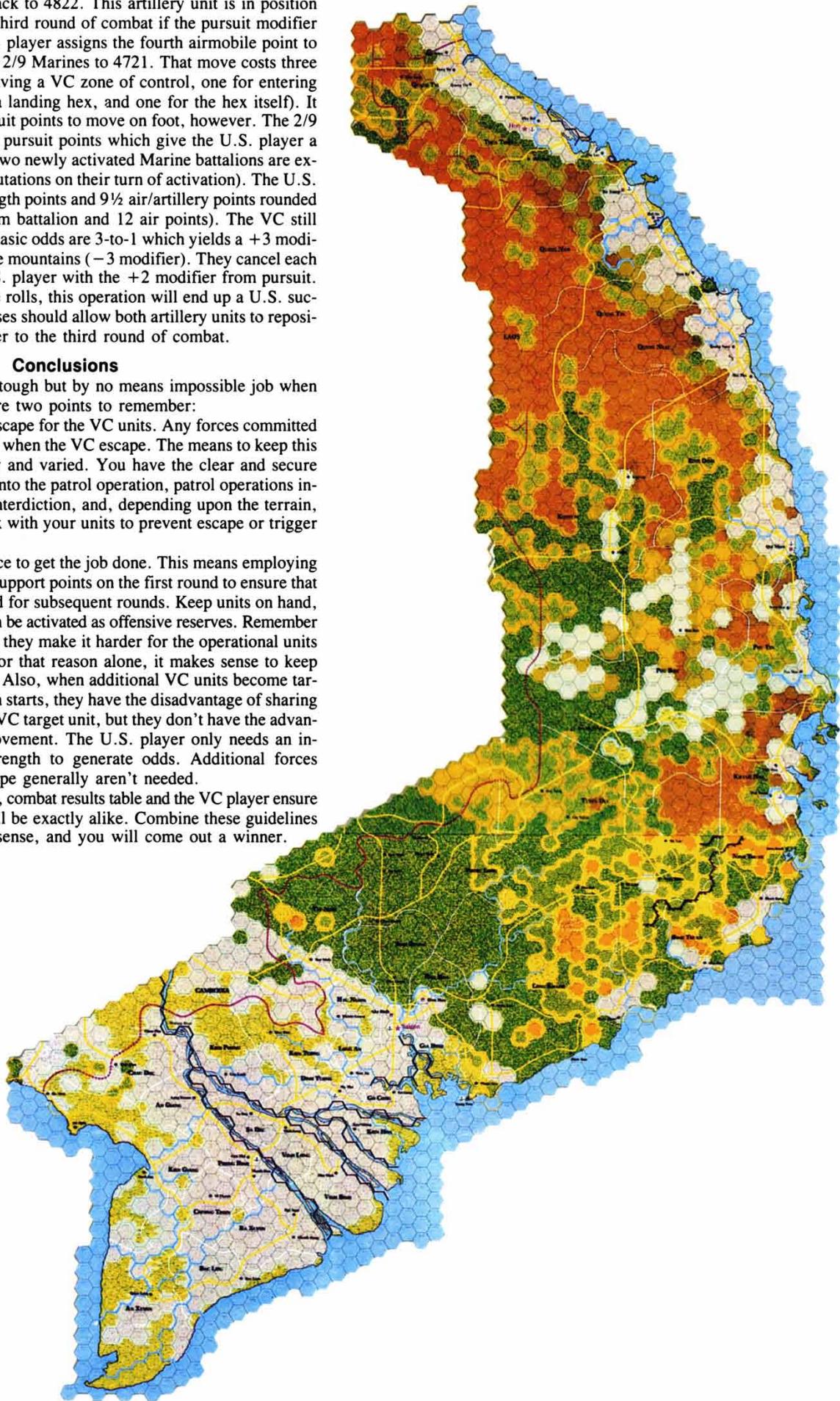
### Conclusions

The U.S. player has a tough but by no means impossible job when hunting the VC. There are two points to remember:

Cut off the avenues of escape for the VC units. Any forces committed to an operation are wasted when the VC escape. The means to keep this from happening are many and varied. You have the clear and secure operation which changes into the patrol operation, patrol operations inhibiting VC movement, interdiction, and, depending upon the terrain, surrounding the target hex with your units to prevent escape or trigger incidental attacks.

Second, use enough force to get the job done. This means employing enough ground units and support points on the first round to ensure that decent pursuit is generated for subsequent rounds. Keep units on hand, especially artillery, that can be activated as offensive reserves. Remember that as VC units combine, they make it harder for the operational units to maintain good odds. For that reason alone, it makes sense to keep offensive reserves on tap. Also, when additional VC units become target units after an operation starts, they have the disadvantage of sharing all the risk of the original VC target unit, but they don't have the advantage of an initial alert movement. The U.S. player only needs an incremental addition of strength to generate odds. Additional forces necessary to prevent escape generally aren't needed.

The alert die roll, terrain, combat results table and the VC player ensure that no two operations will be exactly alike. Combine these guidelines with your own common sense, and you will come out a winner.



# An Infantryman's Diary

**From the Journal of Daniel "Coke" Simmons, PFC, U.S. Army**

Transcribed By  
William Hamilton

Ambush represents to me the merging of three very exciting hobbies. For gamers, there is the realism of tactical combat (with albeit very intensive action); for computer gamers there is the programmed action paragraphs; and there is the element of role-playing that gives you a variety of options (would you leave your wounded buddy behind, or go on and attempt to finish the mission?). For those who agree, not only is Victory coming out with Purple Heart sometime in the future, but at that time the Insider will publish a scenario of its own! So, it is with pleasure that we present this article: one man's journey through the world of Ambush. WEP

### 7 June 1944

War is Hell, all right. All us GI's that have seen action know that for a fact. After minimal training, we were dropped into France. We were to capture and hold two important bridges near Caretin for the boys busting through Utah Beach (*mission 4*). The winds were gusting at dawn and we got jerked all over the drop site. Willie Stevens drowned in the river when he couldn't get out of the chute. Tom Wilson took one in the belly and died before the medic came. The Krauts must have known something was up because they blew the bridges before we could stop them. Big Bubba Jones killed a couple of Krauts and near blew off the leg of another with his Browning but didn't get more than a nod from the Looie when we got back. Probably because he was a negro. I like Bubba, and wouldn't want anyone else to be in a firefight with. I busted a Jerry open with my carbine as did our second in command, Stan Browne. All in all, we gave as good as we got, killing two and incapacitating five more. Too bad about them bridges. Sgt. Dirty Jack got a commendation and Richie Long got a Purple Heart for getting wounded.

### 5 July 1944 (*Mission 5*)

Dirty Jack sure lives up to his name. He volunteered us for a raid to bust up a rocket base in Holland. With help from the Dutch underground, we found ourselves on the outskirts of the base early yesterday morning. We had been given plenty of explosives, but found ourselves short of them before we would have liked. Our orders were to destroy what we could and try to find some documents on a rocket the Germans were building. Well, we found the documents, blew up a tower and radar station, but had to scram when we ran out of demo packs and things started heating up. We got out, but lost our two replacements. Arnie Davies took one between the eyes and died instantly. Charlie Simmons (he was the Rabbit, since his eyes got real big and would shake in a fight) took some shrapnel in the belly and died real slow, scared as hell and crying for the pain to stop. His last words were for his mom. I volunteered to write his parents and found it worse than busting tanks with baseball bats. The CO destroyed a command car with a grenade and we kill three and incapacitate one. I didn't get any, but did get a commendation. I found out later that Stan Browne told the Looie about Rabbit dying in my arms.

### 10 August 1944

After our last mission, we got 10 days R&R and then some guard duty. Eight August, our orders came through to bivouac at Mortin, a small French town. Never could spell those Frenchie names right. We got AT mines and a Jeep since a tank attack was expected (*mission 2*). Dirty Jack took along a bazooka and got Rick Long to load for him. We sure did a number on the Jerrys when they tried to cruise through. Sgt. Wagner and PFC Long personally KO'd a Panzer and a Jagdpanther tank destroyer along with three Germans with the baz. Wagner then threw himself on a live grenade, and all we found were his stripes and his Purple Heart. That was all we wanted to find. When the tanks started going up in smoke, Krauts started crawling out of the woodwork. They tossed

everything they had at us, but we got nine of them, losing two. Our other casualty was the second, Stan Browne, who caught a machine pistol. I incapped three guys and wounded one in hand-to-hand, and got another with a crack shot of my semi-auto. Got another commendation for that one. All in all, we only let two Krauts slip through. A good day.

### 14 August 1944

We got our new CO today; a real vain bastard by the name of Vance Hughes. The second's name is Junior Carlin, but he told everyone to call him Spike. He's a real decent sort, compared to Hughes. I guess that's what you call taking the bad with the good.

### 23 August 1944

Our next engagement was during an offensive. While waiting for fuel and supplies, we were sent ahead to scout out the town of Chasol (*mission 2*). We cleared all the buildings, incapping or killing nine Krauts while none of us so much as bruise a shin. A lucky shot from my carbine knocked down a plane in flight. Hughes, Jimmy Jackson, Lorne Washburn, and even Bubba Jones got commendations for that mission. Washburn was Rabbit's replacement and really showed what he was made of in his first fight.

### 7 September 1944

We were sent forward to capture a crucial bridge across the Sambre two days ago (*mission 8*). They told us that a Sherman would arrive for backup. We reached the bridge with little trouble, but when the Sarge went to check the bridge, the Krauts blew it up. Hughes got a nasty gash on his arm, but bandages and sulfa powder took care of it. Luckily, we found a ford a little ways downstream and managed to clear the area. The Sarge was worried about Washburn, who'd taken a couple of bullets, and didn't feel right waiting for the Sherman, so we kept going. Washburn turned out OK and both he and Sarge got Purple Hearts. Doug Crawford, Spike Carlin and I all got commendations.

### 1 November 1944

Things have calmed down, so tomorrow we're being sent to Belgium for garrison duty.

### 5 November 1944

Who ever said garrison duty was easy! Yesterday, we were out on patrol. There must have been Krauts all through the area. Although the attack was sudden, we killed, wounded, or incapped 11 Krauts, and Big Bubba knocked out a tank with a bazooka. Bubba later took some nasty shrapnel in the leg, but we bound it up and got him out.

### 20 January 1944

Wow! You want to talk about hairy missions. Sixteen January saw us approaching the bunker-packed West Wall by canoe (*mission 6*). Good thing it was at night or we might have crapped if we'd seen all the bunkers. We knocked out a couple and wasted about half a dozen other Krauts, though it cost us our CO and Bubba. That fool Hughes must have gone nuts, cause he tried to rush one of the bunkers and got cut in half. Washburn, Rick Long and Crawford all got commendations on that one.

### 25 January 1945

The new replacements arrived today. Our new second (Spike's now CO) is Willard Wilcox, and seems a decent enough sort. Bubba's replacement is Freddie Thompson. Those are awful big shoes to fill, Fred. I wonder what our next mission will be like?

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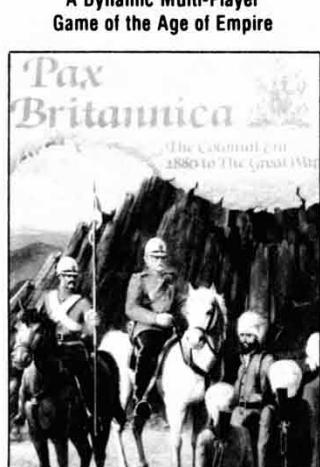
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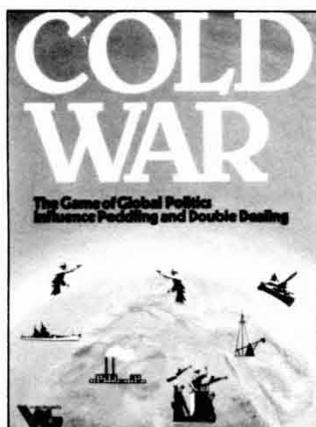
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